

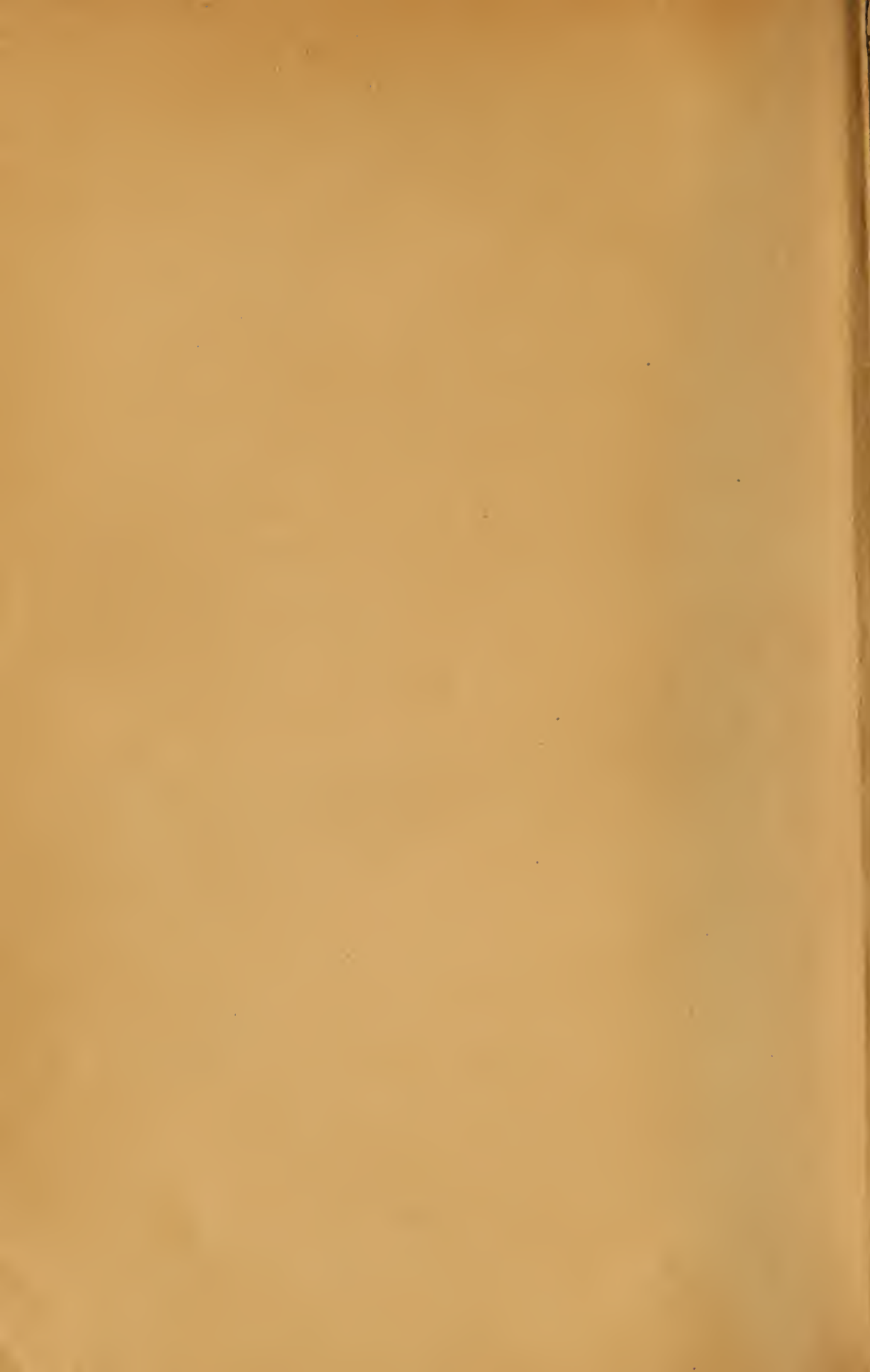


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THE LIFE & WORKS
OF ROBERT
HARRIS. VOLUME
I. DE ROBERT
HARRIS.

NEW EDITION
BY
WILLIAM
WALLACE





THE
LIFE AND WORKS
OF
ROBERT BURNS



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*Just May a brow-woon cam down the long glen
And sur in his love he did deave me.*

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THE
LIFE AND WORKS
OF
ROBERT BURNS

EDITED BY ROBERT CHAMBERS

REVISED BY
WILLIAM WALLACE

IN FOUR VOLUMES

VOLUME IV.

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P R E F A C E.

ALTHOUGH the final volume of the New Edition of Dr Robert Chambers's 'Life and Works of Robert Burns' is larger than any of its predecessors, the strictly biographical portion is comparatively small. But as the period embraced in it has been the subject of considerable controversy—especially as to the origin and dates of several of Burns's poems and as to the determining causes of his death—investigations begun by Dr Robert Chambers after the publication of the first edition have been completed, the result being a partial re-grouping of poems and songs, and a considerable recasting of narrative. Some argumentative matter bearing on the reputation and habits of Burns during the latest years of his life, which was formerly given as an appendix, is accordingly incorporated either with the text of the biography or with the closing Essay, in which an attempt is made to appraise the character of the man and the work of the poet. As in the first edition, Versicles, Songs Improved, Fragments, and Doubtful Poems are given apart from the body of the work. No effort has been spared to make the Indexes at once exhaustive and convenient for purposes of reference.

In connection with this volume, as with its predecessors, I have to acknowledge my obligations to the owners and custodiers of Burns MSS. for the favours of many kinds which they have shown me. I have specially to thank the Executive Council of the recent Burns Exhibition in Glasgow, and the owners of manuscripts and books which were included in it, for giving me

facilities in the work of collation. An examination of the letters written by Burns to George Thomson, which are the property of the Earl of Dalhousie, has enabled me to reproduce this correspondence accurately for the first time. For other courtesies, of which the results are to be seen in this volume, I have to thank Mr ALFRED MORRISON, of London; Mr W. CRAIBE ANGUS, of Glasgow; Mr E. M. YOUNG and Mr DAVID M'KETTRICK, of Dumfries.

The labours of the various gentlemen who have aided me in the work, which has now been brought to a close, have been so valuable and of so substantial a character that I cannot but regard the book itself as being at least as much theirs as it is mine. I am deeply indebted and grateful to Mr J. C. EWING, of The Mitchell Library, Glasgow, and Mr JAMES DAVIDSON, M.A., for assistance of this character in the general work of revision and correction; and to my brother, Mr ROBERT WALLACE, M.P. for East Edinburgh, for similar help in the inception and production of an estimate of the character and genius of Burns. I cannot too heartily thank Mr WILLIAM MELVEN, M.A., of Glasgow Academy, for his strenuous exertions to make the Indexes a full and accurate guide to the whole work. The altogether unique bibliographical scholarship and special researches of Mr Ewing have saved me from many errors in alluding to works upon Burns, and have enabled me to present to the public for the first time a number of important and hitherto unpublished letters of the poet, including those relating to his 'contest with the London Newsmen.'

Mr C. E. S. CHAMBERS I have cordially to thank for having placed unreservedly at my disposal the papers relating to Burns, with the help of which his grandfather, Dr Robert Chambers, prepared the first edition of this work, and various documents collected and notes made subsequently by the same careful hand. But for these and the information which they contained or directed me to, such correction and reconstruction of the original narrative as I have

been able to effect would have been impossible. My friend Dr DAVID PATRICK, Editor of *Chambers's Encyclopædia*, has read the proofs of the New Edition from the beginning. To his great and various learning, and to his knowledge of Ayrshire, I am indebted for most valuable suggestions, more particularly in tracing to their often unfamiliar sources the numerous quotations which, better than anything else, show the range of Burns's reading. While the first and second volumes of this edition were passing through the press, I received much help from the late Mr ROBERT MOWAT, Managing Director of Messrs W. & R. Chambers; his enthusiasm for Burns, and acquaintance with Scottish life, language, and literature were greatly above the common.

Although several Letters and Songs which have been recovered during the past forty years have not been given a place in the present work, on account of their triviality or for other reasons, it may be interesting to note that it contains nearly fifty poems and fragments of poems and sixty letters which did not appear in the original edition. The growth of the book generally may be judged by the fact that, while the four volumes of the original edition contained respectively 362, 322, 320, and 356 pages, the corresponding figures in the present work are 492, 416, 467, and 623.

WILLIAM WALLACE.

GLASGOW, *December* 1896.

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LIFE AND WORKS
OF
ROBERT BURNS.

CHAPTER I.

DUMFRIES (JULY 1793—FEBRUARY 1794).

ABOUT the middle of 1793 Burns had a visit from an old Ayrshire friend, Archibald (now the Rev. Archibald) Lawrie, son of Dr George Lawrie of Loudoun. The young man was travelling from Cheltenham to his home at St Margaret's Hill, riding all the way. He reached Dumfries on the 19th June. He has recorded in his journal * his meeting with Burns.

* An account of this journal was communicated to the *Athenaeum* of July 25, 1896, by the Rev. H. Grey Graham, minister of Hyndland Church, Glasgow, a grandson of this Archibald Lawrie, with the following introduction :

'About fifty years ago Robert Chambers got the use of several family papers connected with Burns, whose life he was then writing and whose works he was editing. Three letters, here printed, were, however, not sent to him, and part of a journal, giving a curious glimpse of the poet as he lived at Dumfries, was overlooked. The letters were written to Mr Archibald Lawrie, then studying for the Church, who afterwards became assistant and successor to his father, Dr George Lawrie, minister of Loudoun, Ayrshire, the helpful friend of Burns. Mr Lawrie, my grandfather, was staying in Edinburgh in February 1787, at the time that the poet made his memorable first visit to the city, and was residing in Shakespeare Square, which many years ago disappeared with the Theatre Royal, behind which it stood, in order to make way, I think, for the General Post Office :

"LAWNMARKEET, Monday noon.

"MON CHER MONSIEUR—To-night the Grand Master and Lodge of Masons appear at the Theatre in forn. I am determin'd to go to the play. I am afraid it will be impossible to forn a *partie* with our female friends for this night, but I will call on you a few minutes

Mr Lawrie's journal shows that if Burns was prone to 'occasional hard drinking in taverns,' his health was unimpaired by it.

'Before supper I sent for Mr Burns the poet, who came soon after I sent for him, but could not sup with me. He came into the room where I was supping with a number of strangers, and there he sat from 11 at night till 3 next morning. I left them about 12, and had a most confounded and extravagant Bill to pay next morning, which I grudged exceedingly, as I had very little of Burns's company; he was half drunk when he came, and completely drunk before he went away in the morning . . . Thursday, 20th. After breakfast called on Mr B., found him at home, took a plateful of broth with him, and afterwards he took a walk with me thro the town of Dumfries, and along the banks of the Nith, which was extremely pleasant. After having walked some time with Mr B., I returned again with him to his house, where I stayed and dined and spent the day; after dinner we had some charming music from a Mr Fraser,* master of a band of soldiers raised by and belonging to Lord Breadalbane; having drunk tea, we went to a wood upon the banks of the river Nith, when Mr Fraser took out his [haut-boy] and played a few tunes most delightfully, which had a very pleasing effect in the wood. We then left this rural retirement, walked back to the town, where I parted with Mr B., and continued my walk with a Mr Lewis, a friend of Burns, who dined in company with me. The night coming on, I went with Mr Lewis and supped with him on cold mutton and eggs, at 12 o'clock left his house; went to the Inn, King's Arms, and ordered the chambermaid to show me to bed; having rested my mare one day more, which she had not the slightest occasion for, but the temptation of Burns company I could not withstand.'

It has been seen that, in July 1793, when the poet was proudly refusing payment for his songs, he was actually in pressing need of a little money. The edifice of national prosperity which Pitt had built up by his financial policy and his treaty of commerce with France was seemingly shattered at a blow by the declaration of war in February. Trade took fright at the prospect of a long war, and we are soon to see the effect upon Burns's

before the Theatre opens, when, if Miss Lawrie can, I shall be very happy; if not I suppose you will have no objection to take a seat in the pit with—*Toujours le votre,*

"Mons. Archibald Lawrie,

R. BURNS."

"Shakespeare Square."

"DEAR SIR—I cannot be with you at tea to-night, as I have just got a summons to wait on Lord Glencairn in the afternoon. I expect to do myself the pleasure of calling on you between seven and eight. I have wrote to Dr Blacklock and sent him your direction and have promised to meet him at your house.

ROBT. BURNS."

The third letter, written by Burns a week after his arrival in Edinburgh on his second visit, is given at pp. 146, 147 of Vol. II.

* See note, Vol. III., p. 427.

spirits of the falling off of business and the political persecution which were the joint issue of the terror which the Revolution inspired in high places in this country. In the month of July the number of Scottish bankrupts was forty-three, or about four times the average. Burns suffered chiefly because an extra income that he derived from the unloading of foreign vessels was now at an end. And, tongue-tied as he was by his Government appointment, he had to endure in silence both suspicion of his own loyalty and the spectacle of criminal proceedings taken against men of Liberal opinions with whom he sympathised.

TO [GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ. (?)].

DUMFRIES, 16th July 1793.

MY DEAR SIR—I understand that our friend, Mrs Muir* of Tarbolton Mill, is likely to be involved in great difficulties as to the Settlement the late Miller made. Will you be so obliging as to let me know the state of the case; and if you think it would answer any good purpose to advocate the cause to Edinburgh at once, I can answer for her—a Writer to the Signet, an intimate friend of mine, will cheerfully undertake the business, without a single sixpence of fees; and our countryman, David Cathcart, lies under promise to me to advocate at small expense whenever I represent female poverty in distress. I am much interested for her, and will, as far as I have interest in either, move heaven and earth in her behalf. My interest in the first is vastly improved since you and I were first acquainted. Oh, there is nothing like matrimony for setting a man's face Zionward; whether it be that it sublimates a man above the visible diurnal sphere, or whether it tires him of this sublunary state, or whether the delicious morsel of happiness which he enjoys in the conjugal yoke gives him a longing for the feasts above, or whether a poor husband thinks he has every chance in his favour, as, should he go to hell, he can be no worse—I shall leave to a weel-waled [carefully-selected] Presbytery of orthodox Ayrshire priests to determine.—Yours most sincerely,

ROBT. BURNS.

TO MR PETER HILL.

[DUMFRIES, circa July 1793.]

MY DEAR SIR—I am half angry with you that you are not at any pains to keep squares with our Library here. They complain much of your not attending properly to their orders; and, but for the exertions

* Mrs Muir had given Jean Armour shelter in March 1788, when she was turned out of her father's house. See Vol. II., p. 309.

of Mr Lewars, a young man whom I once introduced to you, they had applied elsewhere. Apropos, the first volume of Dalrymple's *Memoirs* * Mr Lewars had the ill-luck to get spoiled in his possession, which unless he can replace will bring him in for the whole book. It was published, I think, in separate volumes, so that, with a little industry, you may possibly be able to supply him. Mr Wallace,† the gentleman who will deliver this, can inform you of the edition, &c.

Now that business is over, how are you? and how do you weather this accursed time? God only knows what will be the consequence; but in the meantime, the country—at least in our part of it—is still progressive to the devil. For my part, 'I jouk and let the jaw flee o'er.'‡ As my hopes in this world are but slender, I am turning rapidly devotee, in the prospect of sharing largely in the world to come.

How is old, sinful [William] Smellie coming on with this world?—for as to the other, I suppose he has given that up. Is there any talk of his second volume [of his *Philosophy of Natural History*]? If you meet with my much-valued old friend, Colonel Dunbar, of the Crochallan Fencibles, remember me most affectionately to him. Alas! not unfrequently, when my heart is in a wandering humor, I live past scenes over again: to my mind's eye, you, Dunbar, Cleghorn, Cunningham, &c., present their friendly phizes, and my bosom aches with tender recollections.—Adieu,

ROBT. BURNS.

In the later part of July the poet made a tour through Galloway with his friend Syme, who communicated to Dr Currie an animated account of their adventures:

'I got Burns a grey Highland shelty to ride on. We dined the first day, 27th July 1793, at Glendenwynes of Parton, a beautiful situation on the banks of the Dee. In the evening we walked out and ascended a gentle eminence, from which we had as fine a view of Alpine scenery as can well be imagined. A delightful soft evening showed all its wilder, as well as its grander, graces. Immediately opposite, and within a mile of us, we saw Airds, a charming romantic place, where dwelt Lowe, the author of "Mary, weep no more for me." § This was classic ground for Burns. He viewed "the highest hill which rises o'er the source of Dee," and would

* Probably *Memorials and Letters relating to the History of Britain in the Reign of James the First*, by Sir David Dalrymple (Lord Hailes).

† A lawyer in Dumfries and a devoted friend and admirer of Burns.

‡ A Scottish proverbial expression, meaning: 'I duck and let the wave pass over me.'

§ A well-known ballad, beginning:

'The moon had climbed the highest hill

Which rises o'er the source of Dee;

And, from the eastern summit, shed

Its silver light on tower and tree.'—See Vol. II., p. 359.

have staid till the "passing spirit" had appeared, had we not resolved to reach Kenmure that night. We arrived as Mr and Mrs Gordon* were sitting down to supper.

'Here is a genuine baron's seat. The castle, an old building, stands on a large natural moat. In front, the river Ken winds for several miles through the most fertile and beautiful holm; till it expands into a lake twelve miles long, the banks of which, on the south, present a fine and soft landscape of green knolls, natural wood and, here and there, a grey rock. On the north the aspect is great, wild and, I may say, tremendous. In short, I can scarcely conceive a scene more terribly romantic than the castle of Kenmure. Burns thinks so highly of it that he meditates a description of it in poetry. Indeed I believe he has begun the work. We spent three days with Mr Gordon, whose polished hospitality is of an original and endearing kind. Mrs Gordon's lapdog *Echo* was dead. She would have an epitaph for him. Several had been made. Burns was asked for one. This was setting Hercules to the distaff. He disliked the subject, but, to please the lady, he would try. Here is what he produced—

"In wood and wild, ye warbling throng,
Your heavy loss deplore:
Now, half-extinct your powers of song—
Sweet *Echo* is no more.

"Ye jarring, screeching things around,
Scream your discordant joys:
Now half your din of tuneless sound
With *Echo* silent lies."

'We left Kenmure and went to Gatehouse. I took him the moor-road, where savage and desolate regions extended wide around. The sky was sympathetic with the wretchedness of the soil; it became lowering and dark. The hollow winds sighed, the lightnings gleamed, the thunder rolled. The poet enjoyed the awful scene—he spoke not a word, but seemed rapt in meditation. In a little while the rain began to fall; it poured in floods upon us. For three hours did the wild elements *rumble their belly-ful* †

* Mr Gordon (b. 1750, d. 1840), grandson of the Jacobite Viscount Kenmure; the title was restored in his person in 1824.

† *Lear*, III. ii. 14.

upon our defenceless heads. *Oh! oh! 'twas foul!** We got utterly wet; and, to revenge ourselves, Burns insisted at Gatehouse on our getting utterly drunk.

‘From Gatehouse we went next day to Kirkeudbright, through a fine country. But here I must tell you that Burns had got a pair of *Jemmy* boots for the journey, which had been thoroughly wet, and which had been dried in such a manner that it was not possible to get them on again. The brawny poet tried force and tore them to shreds. A whiffling vexation of this sort is more trying to the temper than a serious calamity. We were going to St Mary’s Isle, the seat of the Earl of Selkirk, and the forlorn Burns was discomfited at the thought of his ruined boots. A sick stomach and a headache lent their aid, and the man of verse was quite *accablé*. I attempted to reason with him. Mercy on us, how he did fume and rage! Nothing could reinstate him in temper. I tried various expedients, and at last hit on one that succeeded. I showed him the house of Garlieston, across the Bay of Wigton. Against the Earl of Galloway, with whom he was offended, he expectorated his spleen and regained a most agreeable temper. He was in a most epigrammatic humour indeed! He afterwards fell on humbler game. There is one Morine† whom he does not love. He had a passing blow at him:

“When Morine, deceas’d, to the Devil went down,
 ’Twas nothing would serve him but Satan’s own crown:
 ‘Thy fool’s head,’ quoth Satan, ‘that crown shall wear never;
 I grant thou’rt as wicked—but not quite so clever.’”

‘Well, I am to bring you to Kirkeudbright along with our poet without boots. I carried the torn ruins across my saddle in spite of his fulminations and in contempt of appearances; and what is more, Lord Selkirk‡ carried them in his coach to Dumfries. He insisted they were worth mending.§

‘We reached Kirkeudbright about one o’clock. I had promised

* ‘O! ’tis foul in her.’—Iago in *Othello*, IV. i. 213.

† The Laird of Laggan, adjoining Ellisland, which latter place he purchased when Burns removed to Dumfries.

‡ This was the formal Lord Selkirk (succeeded 1744, died 1799), to whom properly is applicable the anecdote of *symmetry*, related by Sir Walter Scott in his amusing ‘Malagrowth Letters.’

§ The poet had his boots from Robert Anderson, a Dumfries tradesman, at £1, 2s. a pair, being four times the price of a pair of men’s shoes in those days.

that we should dine with one of the first men in our country, John Dalzell.* But Burns was in a wild and obstreperous humour, and swore he would not dine where he should be under the smallest restraint. We prevailed, therefore, on Mr Dalzell to dine with us in the Inn, and had a very agreeable party. In the evening we set out for St Mary's Isle. Robert had not absolutely regained the milkiness of good temper and it occurred once or twice to him, as he rode along, that St Mary's Isle was the seat of a Lord; yet that lord was not an aristocrat, at least in his sense of the word. We arrived about eight o'clock, as the family were at tea and coffee. St Mary's Isle is one of the most delightful places that can, in my opinion, be formed by the assemblage of every soft, but not tame, object which constitutes natural and cultivated beauty. But not to dwell on its external graces, let me tell you that we found all the ladies of the family (all beautiful) at home, and some strangers, and among others who but Urbani!† The Italian sang us many Scottish songs, accompanied with instrumental music. The two young ladies of Selkirk sang also. We had the song of "Lord Gregory," which I asked for, to have an opportunity of calling on Burns to recite *his* ballad to that tune. He did recite it; and such was the effect that a dead silence ensued. It was such a silence as a mind of feeling naturally preserves when it is touched with that enthusiasm which banishes every other thought but the contemplation and indulgence of the sympathy produced. Burns's "Lord Gregory" is, in

* John Dalzell, of Barneroch, near Kirkeudbright, was a man who loved fun and good company; and Burns and he were very good friends. Mr Dalzell was also on intimate terms with Gordon of Kenmure, who once sent him a present of a snuff-mull. He acknowledged the gift in these lines:

'Your present I received, and letter:
 No compliment could please me better.
 EX DONO KENMURE I'll put on it,
 And crown it wi' a silver bonnet,—
 In spite of a' the deils in —,
 Your humble servant,
 JOHN DALZELL.'

Mrs Dalzell, when residing in Edinburgh in 1843, related several anecdotes of Burns to her nephew, Colonel Leslie of Balquhain. One is recollected. The poet came one morning to breakfast, unexpectedly, while she was sitting on a stool before the fire, nursing her child. Supposing it to be the nurse who had entered, she, without looking round, desired the woman by name to take the baby. Burns came quietly up behind, and took the infant, and sitting down on the stool, began to act the nurse, rocking it and singing to it in the most expressive manner.

† Pietro Urbani, an Italian musician (1749–1816), then settled in Edinburgh. He edited a collection of the Song-Music of Scotland.

my opinion, a most beautiful and affecting ballad. The fastidious critic may perhaps say some of the sentiments and imagery are of too elevated a kind for such a style of composition : for instance, "Thou bolt of heav'n that flashest by" and "Ye mustering thunders from above ;" but this is a cold-blooded objection, which will be *said* rather than *felt*.

'We enjoyed a most happy evening at Lord Selkirk's. We had in every sense of the word a feast, in which our minds and our senses were equally gratified. The poet was delighted with his company, and acquitted himself to admiration. The lion that had raged so violently in the morning was now as mild and gentle as a lamb. Next day we returned to Dumfries, and so ends our peregrination.

'I told you that in the midst of the storm on the wilds of Kenmure, Burns was rapt in meditation. What do you think he was about? He was charging the English army, along with Bruce, at Bannockburn. He was engaged in the same manner on our ride home from St Mary's Isle, and I did not disturb him. Next day he produced me the following address of Bruce to his troops, and gave me a copy for Dalzell :

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,' &c.

Mr Carson, one of the gentlemen whom Burns met at Kenmure, has supplemented Syme's narrative :

'The only friends of the host and hostess invited to meet the travellers, Burns and Syme, at Kenmure were the Rev. John Gillespie, the highly esteemed minister of the parish (Kells), and myself.

'On the evening preceding their departure, the bard having expressed his intention of climbing to the top of "the highest hill that rises o'er the source of Dee," there to see the arbour of Lowe, the author of the celebrated song "Mary's Dream," Mr Gordon proposed that they should all sail down the loch in his barge *Glenkens*, to the Airds Hill below Lowe's seat. Seeing that this proposal was intended in compliment by the worthy host both to the bard and to Mr Gillespie, who had been the patron of Lowe, the gentlemen all concurred ; and the weather proving propitious next morning, the vessel soon dropt down to the foot of Loch Ken with all the party on board. Meanwhile, Mr Gordon's groom led the travellers' horses round to the Boat-o'-Rhône, saddled and

bridled, that each rider might mount on descending from the poet's seat ; but the barge unfortunately grounded before reaching the proposed landing-place—an obstruction not anticipated by any of the party. Mr Gordon, with the assistance of an oar, vaulted from the prow of the little vessel to the beach, and was soon followed in like manner by Mr Syme and myself ; thus leaving only the venerable pastor of Kells and the bard on board. The former, being too feeble to jump, as we had done, to land, expressed a desire to remain in the vessel till Mr Gordon and I returned ; upon hearing which, the generous bard instantly slipped into the water, which was, however, so deep as to wet him to the knees. After a short entreaty, he succeeded in getting the clergyman on his shoulders ; on observing which, Mr Syme raised his hands, laughed immoderately and exclaimed : “ Well, Burns, of all the men on earth, you are the last that I could have expected to see *priest-ridden* ! ” We laughed also, but Burns did not seem to enjoy the joke. He made no reply, but carried his load silently through the reeds to land.

‘ When Mr Syme’s account of this excursion with the bard into Galloway appeared in Dr Currie’s first edition of the *Life and Works of Robert Burns*, the Glenkens people, who were actors in this part of the drama, were very much surprised to find the above incident not even alluded to ; but we plainly perceive that Syme had only taken a few incidents of the journey as pegs to hang other drapery upon. We were all fully satisfied that it was by the bard’s wading in the loch that his *new boots* were so thoroughly wet, and that the choler or independence next day manifested by him to Syme was only the result of his wounded feelings at having been made such a laughing-stock by his friend for merely rendering the assistance due by common humanity to old age or infirmity, which Mr Gordon and myself charged ourselves afterwards for having overlooked in that instance.’*

* ‘ It is almost incredible that, so recently as 1880, a man should be living who had seen Burns, but such is the case. The following document was handed to us the other day by a member of our congregation : “ I hereby certify that I saw Robert Burns, the national poet, in the flesh, at what was then called the Boat, now the Bridge, of Ken, on his way to Gatehouse-of-Fleet, in company with Mr Syme, lawyer, Edinburgh, the day before he wrote ‘ Scots wha hae.’ He wore a pair of Wellington boots with white tops.—JAMES MURDOCH, Drumwhiran.” This was written on the 10th of June 1880, in the presence of Mr R. M. Fisher, who has handed it to us. Now, in 1793, Burns was with Mr Syme at the Bridge of Ken, and his biographers tell us about a pair of new boots he wore then, which gave him a good deal of trouble. James Murdoch informed our friend that he was a boy

Syme has perhaps exaggerated the impulsive, irritable, wayward temper of Burns at this period. Beyond doubt, however, he was in a highly-strung nervous condition. The Government was, in his opinion, pursuing a course ruinous to the country; yet he dared not lift up his voice against it. His 'bosom was ready to burst with indignation' at the conduct of the 'mighty villains' who were involving him and thousands more in distress 'out of the wantonness of ambition,' or 'from some still more ignoble passions.' But he was not at liberty to free his soul. He was a servant of the 'State' whose conduct moved his wrath. The situation could not fail to be galling to a man of Burns's temperament.

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 1st Aug. 1793.

DEAR SIR—I had the pleasure of receiving your last two letters, and am happy to find you are quite pleased with the appearance of the first book. When you come to hear the songs sung and accompanied, you will be charmed with them.

The 'Bonny Brucket Lassie' certainly deserves better verses, and I hope you will match her. 'Cauld Kail in Aberdeen,' 'Let me in this ae night,' and several of the livelier airs wait the Muse's pleasure; these are peculiarly worthy of her choice gifts; besides, you'll notice that in airs of this sort, the singer can always do greater justice to the poet than in the slower airs of 'The Bush aboon Traquair,' 'Lord Gregory,' and the like; for in the manner the latter are frequently sung, you must be contented with the sound without the sense. Indeed, both the airs and words are disguised by the very slow, psalm-singing style in which they are too often performed: they lose animation and expression altogether, and instead of speaking to the mind, or touching the heart, they cloy upon the ear, and set us a-yawning.

Your ballad, 'There was a Lass, and she was fair,' is simple and beautiful and shall undoubtedly grace my collection.*

G. T.

eleven years of age when he was at the ferry as the poet came along, and that it fell to him to row the great man over. That would be eighty-seven years before he dictated the above; and as our informant tells us that Murdoch was close on 100 years of age when he died in 1881 or 1882, there seems no doubt that his statement is absolutely true. Drumwhiran is in Dumfriesshire, we understand, not far from the well-known Craigenputtock of Thomas Carlyle.—From *A Little Scottish World* (the parish of Monkton), by the Rev. Kirkwood Hewat.

* Thomson had here added some verbal criticism, to which allusion is made in due course by Burns.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[August 1793.]

MY DEAR THOMSON—I hold the pen for our friend Clarke, who at present is studying the music of the spheres at my elbow. The *Georgium Sidus*,* he thinks, is out of tune; so, until he rectify that matter, he cannot stoop to terrestrial affairs.

He sends you six of the *Rondo* subjects, and if more are wanted, he says you shall have them.

R. B.

Damn your long stairs!

S. CLARKE.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

August 1793.

Your objection, my dear Sir, to the passages in my song of 'Logan Water' is right in one instance: the phrase 'cruel joys,' is there improper; but it is difficult to mend it: if I can, I will.† The other passage you object to, does not appear in the same light to me.

The phrase 'mammie's wark,' universally among the peasantry, signifies 'mother's work:' if you think this last better, you may adopt it. Your other objection to this song will vanish, when you consider that I have not painted Miss M'[Murdo] in the rank which she holds in life, but in the dress and character of a cottager; consequently the utmost simplicity of thought and expression was necessary.

Had you not better send me a list of the next parcel of songs which you intend to publish? As to the large list you sent me, it is so blurred and blotted that nobody besides myself could make any better of it.

I have looked over 'There'll never be peace till Jamie,' &c., but I cannot make any better of it.

I was yesternight in a composing humor, and behold the fruits of it:—

[Here Burns transcribed a song of six stanzas, which he had just composed on the basis of an old song, called 'Let me in this ae Night.' Currie so disliked broadly humorous compositions of this class, that he left it in manuscript.]

I need not hint to you that the chorus goes to the high part of the tune.

I likewise tried my hand on 'Robin Adair,' and you will probably think, with little success; but it is such a damned cramp, out-of-the-way measure, that I despair of doing anything better to it.

* Sir Wm. Herschel discovered the planet Uranus in 1781, and named it *Georgium Sidus* after George III. There is here doubtless an allusion to the *haute politique* of the time.

† See Vol. III., pp. 429, 430; also Letter from Burns to Thomson, September 1793, in which Burns, to mend the passage, substituted a line.

PHILLIS THE FAIR.

TUNE—*Robin Adair*.

While larks, with little wing,
 Fann'd the pure air,
 Tasting the breathing Spring.
 Forth I did fare :
 Gay the sun's golden eye
 Peep'd o'er the mountains high ;
 Such thy morn ! did I cry,
 Phillis the fair.

In each bird's careless song,
 Glad, I did share ;
 While yon wild flowers among,
 Chance led me there :
 Sweet to the opening day,
 Rosebuds bent the dewy spray ;
 Such thy bloom ! did I say,
 Phillis the fair.

Down in a shady walk,
 Doves cooing were,
 I mark'd the cruel hawk
 Caught in a snare :
 So kind may Fortune be,
 Such make his destiny !
 He who would injure thee,
 Phillis the fair.

So much for namby-pamby. I may, after all, try my hand on it in Scots verse. There I always find myself most at home.

I have just put the last hand to the song I meant for 'Cauld Kail in Aberdeen.'* If it suits you to insert it, I shall be pleased, as the heroine is a favourite of mine ; if not, I shall also be pleased, because I wish, and will be glad, to see you act decidedly in the business. Tis a tribute as a man of taste, and as an editor which you owe yourself.

* The song 'O Poortith Cauld and Restless Love.' See Vol. III., pp. 387, 388.

Among your subscribers is, for the songs, the Honorable John Gordon of Kenmure: send his to my care. For the songs and sonatas both, Walter Riddel, Esq., of Woodley Park: send to the care of Mrs Riddel, Dumfries.—Yours,
ROBT. BURNS.

Burns is understood to have in 'Phillis the Fair' embodied the tender feelings which Stephen Clarke entertained towards Miss Philadelphia M'Murdo, one of his pupils. This lady became Mrs Norman Lockhart, of Carnwath.

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

August 1793.

MY GOOD SIR—I consider it one of the most agreeable circumstances attending this publication of mine, that it has procured me so many of your much valued epistles. Pray make my acknowledgments to Saint * Stephen for the tunes; tell him I admit the justness of his complaint on my staircase, conveyed in his laconic postscript to your *jeu d'esprit*, which I perused more than once without discovering exactly whether your discussion was music, astronomy, or politics; though a sagacious friend, acquainted with the convivial habits of the poet and the musician, offered me a bet of two to one you were just drowning care together; that an empty bowl was the only thing that would deeply affect you, and the only matter you could then study to remedy!

I shall be glad to see you give 'Robin Adair' a Scottish dress. Peter† is furnishing him with an English suit for a change, and you are well matched together. Robin's air is excellent, though he certainly has an out-of-the-way measure as ever poor Parnassian wight was plagued with. I wish you would invoke the Muse for a single elegant stanza, to be substituted for the concluding objectionable verses of 'Down the Burn, Davie,' so that this most exquisite song may no longer be excluded from good company.

Mr Allan‡ has made an inimitable drawing from your 'John Anderson, my jo,' which I am to have engraved as a frontispiece to the humorous class of songs; you will be quite charmed with it, I promise you. The old couple are seated by the fireside. Mrs Anderson, in great good humour, is clapping John's shoulders while he smiles and looks at her with such glee, as to shew that he fully recollects the pleasant days and nights when they were 'first acquent.' The drawing would do honour to the pencil of Teniers.

G. T.

* Stephen Clarke.

† Peter Pindar.

‡ David Allan (1744-96), the Scottish painter. The drawing was engraved by Paton Thomson, and inserted as frontispiece to one of Thomson's parts in 1799.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

August 1793.

That crinkum-crankum tune 'Robin Adair' has run so in my head, and I succeeded so ill in my last attempt, that I ventured in this morning's walk, one essay more. You, my dear Sir, will remember an unfortunate part of our worthy friend Cunningham's story, which happened about three years ago.* That struck my fancy, and I endeavoured to do the idea justice, as follows :

SONG.

TUNE—*Robin Adair.*

Had I a cave on some wild distant shore,
Where the winds howl to the waves' dashing roar ;
There would I weep my woes,
There seek my lost repose,
Till grief my eyes should close,
Ne'er to wake more !

Falsest of womankind, canst thou declare
All thy fond-plighted vows, fleeting as air !
To thy new lover hie,
Laugh o'er thy perjury ;
Then in thy bosom try
What peace is there !

By the way, I have met with a musical Highlander in Breadalbane's Fencibles, which are quartered here, who assures me that he well remembers his mother singing Gaelic songs to both 'Robin Adair,' and 'Gramachree.' They certainly have more of the Scots than the Irish taste in them.

This man comes from the vicinity of Inverness, so it could not be any intercourse with Ireland that could bring them ; except what I shrewdly suspect to be the case—the wandering minstrels, harpers and pipers, used to go frequently errant through the wilds both of Scotland and Ireland, and so some favorite airs might be common to both. A case in point—they have lately in Ireland, with great pomp, published an Irish air, as they say, called 'Caun du delish.' The fact is, in a publication

* Nearly four and a half years previously. Cunningham had been jilted with a degree of coolness which seems to have for the time excited great and general surprise. See notes, Vol. III., p. 37, and Vol. II., p. 357.

of Corrie's, a great while ago, you will find the same air called a Highland one, with a Gaelic song set to it. Its name there, I think, is 'Oran Gaoil,' and a fine air it is. Do ask honest Allan, or the Rev. Gaelic parson, about these matters.—Ever yours,

ROBT. BURNS.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[19th] August 1793.

MY DEAR SIR—'Let me in this æ Night,' I shall overlook. I am glad that you are pleased with my song, 'Had I a Cave,' &c., as I liked it myself.

I walked out yesterday evening with a volume of the *Museum* in my hand, when, turning up *Allan Water*, 'What numbers shall the muse repeat,' &c., it appeared to me rather unworthy of so fine an air, and recollecting that it is on your list, I sat and raved under the shade of an old thorn, till I wrote one to suit the measure. I may be wrong, but I think it not in my worst style. You must know that in Ramsay's *Tea-Table*, where the modern song first appeared, the ancient name of the tune, Allan says is 'Allan Water, or My Love Annie's very bonie.' This last has certainly been a line of the original song; so I took up the idea, and, as you see, have introduced the line in its place, which I presume it formerly occupied; though I likewise give you a choosing line, if it should not hit the cut of your fancy:

BY ALLAN STREAM I CHANC'D TO ROVE.

TUNE—*Allan Water*.

By Allan stream I chanc'd to rove
 While Phœbus sunk beyond Benledi;
 The winds were whispering through the grove,
 The yellow corn was waving ready:
 I listen'd to a lover's sang,
 An' thought on youthful pleasures many;
 And ay the wild-wood echoes rang,
 'O, dearly do I lo'e thee, Annie!

'O happy be the woodbine bower,
 Nae nightly bogle make it eerie; ghost—weird
 Nor ever sorrow stain the hour,
 The place and time I met my dearie!'

Her head upon my throbbing breast,
 She, sinking, said 'I'm thine for ever !'
 While mony a kiss the seal imprest—
 The sacred vow we ne'er should sever.

The haunt o' spring's the primrose-brac, hill, bank
 The simmer joy's the flocks to follow ;
 How cheery, thro' her shortening day,
 Is autumn in her weeds o' yellow :
 But can they melt the glowing heart,
 Or chain the soul in speechless pleasure ?
 Or through each nerve the rapture dart,
 Like meeting her, our bosom's treasure ?

Bravo ! say I ; it is a good song, should you think so too (not else), you can set the music to it, and let the other follow as English verses.

I cannot touch 'Down the Burn, Davie.' 'The last time I came o'er the muir' I shall have in my eye.

Autumn is my propitious season, I make more verses in it than in all the year else. God bless you ! *

R. B.

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.†

EDINBURGH, 20th August 1793.

BRAVISSIMO ! I say. It is an excellent song. There is not a single line that could be altered. Of the two lines—'O my love Annie's very bonie !' and 'O dearly do I love thee, Annie !' I prefer the latter de-

* 'While he lived in Dumfries, he had three favourite walks : on the Dock-Green by the river-side ; among the ruins of Lincluden College ; and towards the Martingdon-ford, on the north side of the Nith. This latter place was secluded, commanded a view of the distant hills and the romantic towers of Lincluden, and afforded soft greensward banks to rest upon, and the sight and sound of the stream. Here he composed many of his finest songs. As soon as he was heard to hum to himself, his wife saw that he had something in his mind, and was prepared to see him snatch up his hat, and set silently off for his musing-ground. When by himself, and in the open air, his ideas arranged themselves in their natural order—words came at will, and he seldom returned without having finished a song. In case of interruption, he set about completing the work at the fireside ; he balanced himself on the hind-legs of his arm-chair, and rocking to and fro, continued to hum the tune, and seldom failed of success. When the verses were finished, he passed them through the ordeal of Mrs Burns's voice ; listened attentively when she sang ; and asked her if any of the words were difficult ; and when one happened to be too rough, he readily found a smoother ; but he never, save at the resolute entreaty of a scientific musician, sacrificed sense to sound. The autumn was his favourite season, and the twilight his favourite hour of study.'—A. CUNNINGHAM.

† Printed, from the MS., by Scott Douglas, who noted that 'it is the solitary specimen of Thomson's letters to our poet that is known to exist.'

cidedly. Till I received this song, I had half resolved not to include 'Allan Water' in the collection, and for this reason, that it bears such a near resemblance to a much finer air—at least, a greater favourite of mine—'Galashiels' or 'Ah, the poor shepherd's mournful fate;' the beginning is almost quite the same.

I have made up a correct list of my 100 airs, of which I shall send you a copy in the course of a few weeks. It is my fixed intention not to exceed that number; by going farther, I should only be induced to take a number of trifling airs, and so swell both the size and price of the book beyond bounds. And I find my list contains every fine air that is known of the serious and pastoral kind, besides two or three never before published—all diamonds of the first water.

I stand pledged to furnish English verses along with every Scottish song, and I must fulfil what I have promised; but I certainly have got into a scrape if you do not stand my friend. A couple of stanzas to each air will do as well as half a dozen; and to an imagination so infinitely fruitful as yours this will not be a Herculean labour. The airs too are all so perfectly familiar to you, and the original verses so much your favourites, that no poet living is qualified to add congenial stanzas, even in English, so much as you are.

I am very glad that you are to revise 'Let me in this ae night.' I put a much greater value upon this beautiful air than either 'Allan Water' or 'Logan Water.' So it is also with 'Cauld Kail in Aberdeen;' I have always considered it among the most pleasing of our melodies. When you first sent me 'O Poortith cauld,' I took the liberty to observe that I thought it too querulous and despondent for the air. I would very fain have something in your best manner for it. There is not an air existing better calculated for telling a pretty tale of love; and therefore I hope that in this propitious season you will think of it some evening under the Thorn tree that witnessed the birth of your 'Allan Water.' Remember also, when the Muse and you are 'in fit retreats for wooing,' that fine ballad-tune, 'Laddie, lie near me.'

I am sorry you cannot think of furnishing a sweet concluding stanza or two for 'Down the burn, Davie;' you will surely allow that, however pleasing the description beginning 'Till baith at length impatient grown,' it is altogether improper for publication; more particularly in a collection that assumes to itself the merit of purification.

I have sent by the Dumfries carrier (carriage paid) a parcel addressed to you containing a set of the Sonatas and Songs for Mr Riddel of Woodley Park; the same for a Mr Boyd who wrote some weeks ago to Mr Hill about them; a set of the songs to Mr Gordon, and a set of both for your friend Mr Clarke. Will you give these to a porter (I mean the two first-named), and send the others at your convenience.—Yours cordially,

G. THOMSON.

P.S.—I think as you do, that 'Oran gaol' is a beautiful tune. I have put it in my list, and propose attaching it to Dr Blacklock's verses, 'Since robb'd of all my soul holds dear.'

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[August 1793.]

You may readily trust, my dear sir, that any exertion in my power is heartily at your service. But one thing I must hint to you: the very name of Peter Pindar is of great service to your publication; so get a verse from him now and then, though I have no objection, as well as I can, to bear the burden of the business.

Is 'Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad,' one of your airs? I admire it much, and yesterday, I set the following verses to it. Urbani, whom I have met with here, begged them of me, as he admires the air much; but as I understand that he looks with rather an evil eye on your work I did not choose to comply. However, if the song does not suit your taste, I may possibly send it him. He is, *entre nous*, a narrow, conceited creature; but he sings so delightfully, that whatever he introduces at your concert must have immediate celebrity. The set of the air which I had in my eye is in Johnson's *Museum*, No. 106.

O WHISTLE AND I'LL COME TO YOU, MY LAD.

TUNE—*O Whistle, and I'll come to you, my Lad.*

Chorus—O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad,
 O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad;
 Tho' father and mother and a' should gae mad, go
 O whistle, and I'll come to you, my lad.

But warily tent, when ye come to court me, watch
 And come na unless the back-yett be a-jee; gate—ajar
 Syne up the back-style, and let naebody see, Then
 And come as ye were na coming to me,
 And come as ye were na coming to me.

At kirk or at market, whene'er ye meet me,
 Gang by me as tho' that ye car'd nae a flie; Go—fly
 But steal me a blink o' your bonie black e'e, glance
 Yet look as ye were na looking at me,
 Yet look as ye were na looking at me.

Ay vow and protest that ye carena for me,
 And *whyles* ye may lightly my beauty a wee; sometimes—under-
 But court na anither, tho' joking ye be, value—a little
 For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me, lure
 For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me.*

* A version of this song had previously appeared in the second volume of the *Scots Musical Museum*.



F. Jenkins. Hellog Paris

The Winding Path.

R.B. Nibb -

R.B. Nibb ARSA.

Another favourite air of mine, is 'The Muckin' o' Geordie's Byre.' When sung slow with expression, I have wished that it had better poetry : *that* I have endeavoured to supply as follows :—

A DOWN WINDING NITH I DID WANDER.

TUNE—*The Mucking o' Geordie's Byre.*

Adown winding Nith I did wander,
To mark the sweet flowers as they spring ;
Adown winding Nith I did wander,
Of Phillis to muse and to sing.

Chorus—Awa' wi' your belles and your beauties,
They never wi' her can compare,
Whaever has met wi' my Phillis,
Has met wi' the queen o' the fair.

The daisy amus'd my fond fancy,
So artless, so simple, so wild ;
Thou emblem, said I, of my Phillis,
For she is simplicity's child.

The rose-bud 's the blush o' my charmer,
Her sweet balmy lip when 'tis prest :
How fair and how pure is the lily !
But fairer and purer her breast.

Yon knot of gay flowers in the arbour,
They ne'er wi' my Phillis can vie :
Her breath is the breath of the woodbine,
Its dew-drop o' diamond, her eye.

Her voice is the song of the morning,
That wakes thro' the green-spreading grove,
When Phœbus peeps over the mountains,
On music, and pleasure, and love.

But beauty how frail and how fleeting !
The bloom of a fine summer's day !
While worth, in the mind o' my Phillis,
Will flourish without a decay.

Mr Clarke begs you to give Miss Phillis a corner in your Book, as she is a particular Flame of his. She is a Miss Phillis M'Murdo, sister to the 'Bonie Jean' which I sent you some time ago. They are both pupils of his. Clarke begs compliments to you, and will send you some more airs in a few days. You shall hear from me the very first grist that I get from my rhyming-mill. Yours,

R. B.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[28th] August 1793.

That tune, 'Cauld Kail,' is such a favorite of yours that I once more roved out yester evening for a gloamin'* shot at the Muses; when the Muse that presides o'er the shores of Nith, or rather my old inspiring dearest nymph, Coila, whispered me the following. I have two reasons for thinking that it was my early, sweet simple Inspirer that was at my elbow, 'smooth-gliding without step' and pouring the song on my glowing fancy. In the first place, since I left Coila's native haunts, not a fragment of a Poet has arisen to cheer her solitary musings, by catching inspiration from her, so I more than suspect that she has followed me hither, or at least makes me occasional visits; secondly, the last stanza of this song I send you, is the very words that Coila taught me many years ago, and which I set to an old Scots reel in Johnson's *Museum*.

COME, LET ME TAKE THEE TO MY BREAST.

AIR—*Cauld Kail*.

Come, let me take thee to my breast,
 And pledge we ne'er shall sunder;
 And I shall spurn, as vilest dust,
 The world's wealth and grandeur:
 And do I hear my Jeanie own
 That equal transports move her?
 I ask for dearest life alone,
 That I may live to love her.

When in my arms, wi' a' thy charms,
 I clasp my countless treasure,
 I'll seek nae mair o' Heaven to share,
 Than sic a moment's pleasure:
 And by thy e'en sae bonie blue,
 I swear I'm thine for ever!
 And on thy lips I seal my vow,
 And break it shall I never!

no more
 such

* Gloamin' = twilight.

If you think the above will suit your idea of your favorite air, I shall be highly pleased. 'The Last Time I came o'er the moor,' I cannot meddle with as to mending it; and the musical world have been so long accustomed to Ramsay's words, that a different song, though positively superior, would not be so well received. I am not fond of choruses to songs, so I have not made one for the foregoing.

Apropos, there is a song of mine in the third Vol. of the *Museum* which would suit 'Dainty Davie.' Tell me how it will suit. It begins, 'O were I on Parnassus Hill.'

Let me have the list of your first hundred songs as soon as possible.
I am ever, my dear sir, yours sincerely, ROBT. BURNS.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[28th] August 1793.

MY DEAR SIR—I have written you already by to-day's post, where I hinted at a song of mine which might suit 'Dainty Davie.' I have been looking over another and a better song of mine in the *Museum*, which I have altered as follows, and which I am persuaded will please you. The words 'Dainty Davie' glide so sweetly in the air that, to a Scots ear, any song to it, without *Davie* being the hero, would have a lame effect.

DAINTY DAVIE.

TUNE—*Dainty Davie*.*

Now rosy May comes in wi' flowers,
To deck her gay green spreading bowers;
And now comes in my happy hours,
To wander wi' my Davie.

Chorus—Meet me on the warlock knowe, fairy knoll
Dainty Davie, dainty Davie;
There I'll spend the day wi' you,
My ain dear, dainty Davie. own

The chrystal waters round us fa',
The merry birds are lovers a',
The scented breezes round us blaw,
A-wandering wi' my Davie.

When purple morning starts the hare
To steal upon her early fare,

* The tune is one of the oldest Scots airs; it appears in Playford's Collection, 1657. Burns first used it in 1785 for 'Rantin, rovin Robin,' Mrs Dunlop's version of which has 'Davie' for 'Robin.'

Then thro' the dews I will repair,
To meet my faithful Davie.

When day, expiring in the west,
The curtain draws of Nature's rest,
I flee to 's arms I lo'e the best,
And that 's my ain dear Davie.

So much for Davie. The chorus you know is to the low part of the tune. See Clarke's set of it in the *Museum*.—Yours, R. B.

N.B.—In the *Museum*, they have drawled out the tune to twelve lines of poetry, which is d—d nonsense. Four lines of song and four of chorus is the way.

The song which Burns thus altered was 'The Gardener wi' his Paidle.*

As his letters show, this was for the poet a month of remarkable activity in song-writing. Trade was in an exceedingly depressed state; the Government was preparing to try Muir and Palmer† for sedition, and no mercy was expected; the world, in Burns's opinion, was out of joint. Yet we see him full of poetic enthusiasm, constantly writing and criticising Scottish songs, and giving only a side-glance at politics, as in the remark on the Georgium Sidus. It must not be supposed that he had forced himself into indifference towards either the state of affairs in France, where the unfortunate Girondists were now perishing in the fields and on the scaffold, or to the progress of the reaction at home, which threatened to crush every sentiment of liberty in which England had formerly gloried. But the beauty of the season at once stirred and soothed him, and he gladly sought some relief in composition from the exasperations of public affairs.

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

[EDINBURGH, 1st Sept. 1793.]

MY DEAR SIR—Since writing you last, I have received half-a-dozen songs, with which I am delighted beyond expression. The humour and fancy of 'Whistle, and I'll come to you, my Lad' will render it nearly as

* See Vol. III., p. 153.

† Thomas Muir (b. Glasgow, 1765), a member of the Scottish Bar, was an active promoter of the Society of Friends of the Constitution and the People. He was tried for sedition in Edinburgh in 1793, and sentenced to fourteen years' transportation. He died abroad in 1796. Rev. Thomas Fyshe Palmer (b. in Bedfordshire, 1747) was a graduate of Cam-

great a favourite as 'Duncan Gray.' 'Come, let me take thee to my breast,' 'Adown winding Nith' and 'By Allan Stream,' &c., are full of imagination and feeling, and sweetly suit the Airs for which they are intended. 'Had I a Cave on some wild distant shore' is a striking and affecting Composition. Our friend, to whose story it refers, read it with a swelling heart, I assure you. The union we are now forming, I think can never be broken; these songs of yours will descend, with the Music, to the latest posterity, and will be fondly cherished so long as Genius, Taste, and Sensibility exist in our Island.

While the Muse seems so propitious, I think it right to inclose a list of all the favours I have to ask of her—no fewer than twenty and three! I have burdened the pleasant Peter ['Peter Pindar'] with as many as it is probable he will attend to: most of the remaining airs would puzzle the English poet not a little; they are of that peculiar measure and rhythm that they must be *familiar* to him who writes for them.—Yours faithfully,
G. THOMSON.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[Sept. 1793.]

I daresay, my dear Sir, that you will begin to think my correspondence is persecution. No matter, I can't help it; a ballad is my hobby horse which, though otherwise a simple sort of harmless idiotical beast enough, has yet this blessed headstrong property, that when once it has fairly made off with a hapless wight, it gets so enamoured with the tinkle-gingle, tinkle-gingle of its own bells, that it is sure to run poor Pilgarlic,* the bedlam Jockey, quite beyond any useful point or post in the common race of men.

The following song I have composed for 'Oran Gaoil,' the Highland air that you tell me in your last you have resolved to give a place to in your Book. I have this moment finished the song, so you have it glowing from the mint. If it suit you, well! if not, 'tis also well!

BEHOLD THE HOUR.

TUNE—*Oran Gaoil*.

Behold the hour, the boat arrive;
Thou goest, thou darling of my heart:
Sever'd from thee can I survive?
But fate has will'd, and we must part.

bridge and a Unitarian minister in Dundee. He was tried after Muir, convicted of sedition on equally paltry evidence, and sentenced to seven years' transportation. He survived till 1802.

* Pilgarlic, one who peels garlic, a scullion, a leper, a miserable wretch; but used as a phrase of self-depreciation or playful allusion to others as far back as Fletcher's *Humorous Lieutenant* (1619).

I'll often greet this surging swell,
 Yon distant isle will often hail :
 'E'en here, I took the last farewell ;
 There, latest mark'd her vanish'd sail.'

Along the solitary shore,
 While flitting sea-fowl round me cry,
 Across the rolling, dashing roar
 I'll west-ward turn my wistful eye :
 Happy, thou Indian grove, I'll say,
 Where now my Nancy's path may be !
 While thro' thy sweets she loves to stray,
 O tell me, does she muse on me ?

R. B.

 ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

Sept. 1793.

MY DEAR SIR—You know that my pretensions to musical taste are merely a few of Nature's instincts, untaught and untutored by art. For this reason, many musical compositions, particularly where much of the merit lies in counterpoint, however they may transport and ravish the ears of you connoisseurs, affect my simple lug [ear] no otherwise than merely as melodious din. On the other hand, by way of amends, I am delighted with many little melodies, which the learned musician despises as silly and insipid. I do not know whether the old air, 'Hey, tutti, taitie,' may rank among this number ; but well I know that, with Fraser's hant-boy, it has often filled my eyes with tears. There is a tradition which I have met with in many places in Scotland, that it was Robert Bruce's March at the battle of Bannockburn.* This thought, in my yesternight's

* 'The air is also said by some to have been sung by Alexander Montgomery, a pensioner at the court of James VI., as an improvement on an earlier song of the same name popular in the times of the poet Dunbar (1500) and Gavin Douglas (1512). We are further told the same air was afterwards set—about 1720—to a Jacobite drinking song entitled 'Here's to the King, Sir.' It has moreover been supposed that the expression 'Hey, Tuttie, Tattie' arose from the mistake of an ignorant copyist in an ignorant age, who had made a jumble of the title and the Italian direction 'tutti,' &c. written at the top of a page regarding the performance of the music.'—Greig's *Scots Minstrelsie*. According, however, to the late J. Muir Wood of Glasgow, the words 'Tuti, taiti' are only an attempted imitation of the trumpet-notes ; and he quotes in proof a verse of the Jacobite song :

'When you hear the trumpet soun'
 Tuti taiti to the drum,
 Up sword and down gun,
 And to the loons again.'

—'Scotch Music' in Grove's *Dictionary of Music*.

evening-walk, warmed me to a pitch of enthusiasm on the theme of liberty and independence, which I threw into a kind of Scots Ode, fitted to the air, that one might suppose to be the gallant royal Scot's address to his heroic followers on that eventful morning.

BRUCE TO HIS MEN AT BANNOCKBURN.

TUNE—*Hey, tuttie taitie.*

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,	who have
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,	whom
Welcome to your gory bed,	
Or to victorie !	

Now 's the day, and now 's the hour ;
 See the front of battle lour ;
 See approach proud Edward's power—
 Chains and slaverie !

Wha will be a traitor-knave ?
 Wha can fill a coward's grave ?
 Wha sae base as be a slave ?
 Let him turn and flee !

Wha for Scotland's king and law
 Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
 Freeman stand, or freeman fa',
 Let him follow me !

By oppression's woes and pains !
 By your sons in servile chains !
 We will drain our dearest veins,
 But they shall be free !

Lay the proud usurpers low !
 Tyrants fall in ev'ry foe !
 Liberty's in ev'ry blow !—
 Let us do or die !

So may God ever defend the cause of Truth and Liberty, as He did that day ! Amen. ROBT. BURNS.

P.S.—I shewed the air to Urbani, who was highly pleased with it, and begged me make soft verses for it ; but I had no idea of giving myself

any trouble on the subject, till the accidental recollection of that glorious struggle for Freedom, associated with the glowing ideas of some other struggles of the same nature, *not quite so ancient*, roused my rhyming mania. Clarke's set of the tune, with his bass, you will find in the *Museum*, though I am afraid that the air is not what will entitle it to a place in your elegant selection.

R. B.

So 'Scots wha hae' was, to some extent, inspired by the success of the French in beating back the enemies of their republic; although it may be assumed that Burns in writing it had in his mind the message sent by the Scottish Parliament to the Pope after the Battle of Bannockburn: 'Not for glory, riches, or honour did we fight, but for liberty alone, which no good man abandons but with his life.' The association of ideas came naturally enough to a Scottish patriot of Jacobite leanings. The English Ministers who had declared war on the French Republicans, and so ruined the still struggling Scottish commerce, became in his imagination the ancient enemies of the old-time allies, France and Scotland. Under cover of a fourteenth-century battle-song he was really liberating his soul against the Tory tyranny that was opposing liberty at home and abroad, and, moreover, striking at the comfort of his own fireside.

According to Syme, in his letter on the Galloway excursion of July, Burns was engaged in the composition of this ode during his ride in the storm from Kenmure to Gatehouse, and on his way, two days later, from Kirkeudbright to Dumfries. Syme adds that the poet presented him with a copy of the poem next day, along with one for Dalzell. There is a discrepancy here which cannot be altogether cleared up. It was observed by Dr Currie, who got over the difficulty by coolly altering 'my yesternight's evening-walk,' in the poet's letter to Thomson, to 'my solitary wanderings.' There is not, indeed, in Burns's letter any conclusive proof that the composition was not commenced or thought of during the Galloway excursion. It is scarcely doubted that he composed 'Tam o' Shanter,' as has been related, while wandering one day by the banks of the Nith, in the autumn of 1790; yet, on the 22d of January 1791, he says in a letter to Alexander Cunningham: 'I have *just finished* a poem ("Tam o' Shanter"), which you will receive enclosed'—the truth being that the whole poem had been produced at a heat

three or four months before, and that only a few corrections at most had lately been made on it by the author. So also the song of 'Behold the hour, the boat arrive,' is sent by Burns to Clarinda in a letter of 27th December 1791, she being then about to embark for the West Indies. Yet in a letter to Mr Thomson of September 1793, he sends the same song, saying, 'I have this moment finished the song, so you have it glowing from the mint.' However, Burns's account to Thomson of the composition of 'Scots wha hae'—with its statements that he had thought no more of Urbani's request till 'the accidental recollection,' &c., in his 'yesternight's evening-walk,' 'warmed' him 'to a pitch of enthusiasm,' is too circumstantial to permit us to believe that he gave Syme a copy the day after the conclusion of their excursion at the beginning of the preceding month.

The third line of the second verse of the 'Address' was lately the foundation of a declaration that Burns had confounded Edward II. with Edward I: in short, that he was ignorant of the history of his country. That such was not the case is proved by the following note which Burns added to a copy of the ode which he presented to Dr Hughes of Dumfries:

POSTSCRIPT.

This battle was the decisive blow which put Robert I., commonly called Robert de Bruce, in quiet possession of the Scottish Throne. It was fought against Edward II., son of that Edward who shed so much blood in Scotland in consequence of the dispute between Bruce and Balliol.

Apropos, when Bruce fled from London to claim the Scottish crown, he met with the Cummin, another claimant of the crown, at Dumfries. At the altar in the priory there they met; and it is said that Bruce offered to Cummin—'Give me your land and I'll give you my interest in the crown, or *vice versa*.'

What passed nobody knows; but Bruce came in a great flurry to the door and called out to his followers—'I am afraid that I have slain the Cummin!' 'Are you only *afraid*?' replied Sir Roger de Kilpatrick (ancestor to the present Sir James Kilpatrick of Closeburn) and ran into the church and stabbed Cummin to the heart; and coming back said, shewing a bloody dagger, 'I've sicker'd him!'—that is, in English, 'I have secured him.'

Until lately this was the motto of the Closeburn family; but the late Sir Thomas changed it into 'I make sure.' The crest still is 'The bloody dagger.'

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 5th Sept. 1793.

MY DEAR SIR—I believe it is generally allowed that the greatest modesty is the sure attendant of the greatest merit. While you are sending me verses that even Shakespeare might be proud to own, you speak of them as if they were ordinary productions! Your Heroic ode is to me the noblest Composition of the kind in the Scottish language. I happened to dine yesterday with a party of your friends, to whom I read it. They were all charmed with it; intreated me to find out a suitable Air for it; and reprobated the idea of giving it a tune so totally devoid of interest or grandeur as ‘Hey tuttie taitie.’ Assuredly, your partiality for this tune must arise from the ideas associated in your mind by the tradition concerning it; for I never heard any person, and I have conversed again and again with the greatest enthusiasts for Scots airs—I say, I never heard any one speak of it as worthy of notice.

I have been running over the whole hundred Airs of which I lately sent you the List; and I think ‘Lewie Gordon’ is most happily adapted to your ode; at least, with a very slight variation of the fourth line, which I shall presently submit to you. There is in ‘Lewie Gordon’ more of the grand than the plaintive, particularly when it is sung with a degree of spirit, which your words would oblige the singer to give it. I would have no scruple about substituting your ode in the room of [the song], ‘Lewie Gordon,’ which has neither the interest, the grandeur, nor the Poetry, that characterise your Verses. Now, the variation I have to suggest upon the last line of each verse (the only line too short for the air) is as follows:—

Verse 1st, Or to *glorious* victory.

2d, *Chains*—chains and slavery.

3d, Let him, *let him* turn and flee.

4th, Let him *bravely* follow me.

5th, But *they shall*, they shall be free.

6th, Let us, *let us* do—or die!

If you connect each line with its own verse, I do not think you will find that either the sentiment or the expression loses any of its energy.

The only line which I dislike in the whole of the song is ‘Welcome to your gory bed!’ Would not another word be preferable to ‘Welcome?’ In your next, I will expect to be informed whether you agree to what I have proposed. The little alterations I submit with the greatest deference.

The beauty of the verses you have made for ‘Oran Gaoil’ will insure celebrity to the Air.—Yours ever,

G. THOMSON.

Thomson’s criticism was wide of the mark, particularly as to the choice of an air for Bruce’s Address. ‘Lewie Gordon’ is a

tame melody, quite unsuited for such heroic words. Besides, the insertion of expletive syllables in each verse to make it suit that air was insufferable. Thomson carried his point against the better sense of Burns for the time ; but the public in a few years reversed the judgment, and 'Hey, tuttie taitie' was wedded to the song for ever.*

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[Sept. 1793.]

I have received your list, my dear Sir, and here go my observations on it.†

No. 1.—'An' thou wert my ain.' I have not Pinkerton, but before me is Witherspoon's first volume (entitled 'Ancient and Modern Scottish Songs and Heroic Ballads'). I have three songs to this air, and with the same chorus :—

(1st) 'Of race divine thou needs must be.'

(2d) 'Like bees that suck the morning dew.'

(3d) 'As round the elm th' enamour'd vine.'

Of these, all of them good, the first, in my opinion, is the best. The English song, 'Ah, dear Marcella,' &c., is not in my copy of 'The Charmer.'

No. 2.—'Down the Burn, Davie.' I have this moment tried an alteration, leaving out the last half of the third stanza, and the first half of the last stanza, thus :

As down the burn they took their way,

And thro' the flowery dale,

His cheek to hers he aft did lay,

often

And love was ay the tale ;

With 'Mary, when shall we return

Sic pleasure to renew ?'

Such

Quoth Mary, 'Love, I like the burn,

And ay shall follow you.'

No. 3.—Nothing to remark.

No. 4.—'Katharine Ogie.' I should like to see this in your next number.

* Versions of 'Scots wha hae' in Czech, French, German, Irish and Scottish Gaelic, Hungarian, Italian, Swedish, Welsh, and Latin are given in William Jacks's *Robert Burns in other Tongues* (Glasgow, 1896).

† Thomson's list of songs for his Collection. See *ante*, pp. 29 and 35.

No. 5.—‘Low down in the Broom,’ in my opinion, deserves more properly a place among your lively and humorous songs. I shall by-and-by point out some in this last list which rather belong to the first.

No. 6.—‘Lewie Gordon.’ Jamie Dawson is a beautiful ballad, but is of great length; cannot you, for sake of economy in the press-work, substitute a short one?

No. 7.—Nothing.

No. 8.—‘Cowden-knowes.’ Remember, in your index, that the song is in pure English to this tune, beginning

When summer comes, the swains on Tweed,

is the production of Crawford. Robert was his Christian name.

Nos. 9, 10.—Nothing.

No. 11.—‘Bonie Dundee.’ Your objection of the stiff line is just; but mending my colouring would spoil the likeness; so the picture must stand as it is.*

No. 12.—‘The last time I came o’er the moor.’ Why encumber yourself with another English song to this tune? Ramsay’s is English already to your hand.

No. 13.—‘Flowers of the Forest.’ The verses, ‘I’ve seen the smiling,’ &c., with a few trifling alterations, putting ‘no more’ for ‘nae mair,’ and the word ‘turbid’ in a note at the bottom of your page, to shew the meaning of the word ‘drumly,’ the song will serve you for an English set. A small sprinkling of Scotticisms is no objection to an English reader.

No. 14.—Nothing, except that ‘Despairing beside a clear stream’ is a very popular song to its own tune. Would it not be better to have another in the same measure (there are plenty of them), which have never been set to music?

No. 15.—Nothing.

No. 16.—‘Through the Wood, Laddie.’ I am decidedly of opinion that both in this, and ‘There’ll never be peace till Jamie come hame,’ the second, or high part of the tune (being a repetition of the first part, an octave higher), is only for instrumental music, and would be much better omitted in singing.

No. 17.—‘Lord Gregory.’ Please insert mine in your next number; two or three copies of the song have got into the world, and I am afraid lest they find their way to some pilferers.

No. 18.—‘Thou art gane awa frae me, Mary.’ See the best set of this song in the *Museum*.

Nos. 19, 20, 21.—Nothing.

No. 22.—‘Peggy, I must love thee.’ Please let me take this into consideration. It will do for your third number.

No. 23.—Nothing.

No. 24.—‘Logan Water’ shall wait my revisal; only one passage I think faulty. ‘Cruel joys’ is a d——d stupid expression.

Nos. 25, 26, 27.—Nothing.

* Allusion is here made to the song entitled ‘Jessie,’ in a previous letter.

No. 28.—‘My lodging is on the cold ground.’ Please let it wait your third number to gain time.

Nos. 29, 30.—Nothing.

No. 31.—‘Fair Helen’ is not an air that charms me.

No. 32.—‘Bonie Jean,’ nothing. [‘Bonie Jean of Aberdeen,’ No. 54, Johnson’s *Museum*.]

No. 33.—‘Bonie Jean’ the second. Change the name to ‘There was a Lass, and she was fair,’ which, by-the-by, is the old name of the air. Do make a point of publishing this song to its own tune, and in your next number: you will highly oblige me by it.* Please likewise insert No. 11 (Bonie Dundee) in your next number.

No. 34.—‘Gil Morrice’ I am unalterably for leaving out altogether. It is a plaguery length, which will put you to great press expense, the air itself is never sung; and its place can well be supplied with one or two fine songs which are not at all in your list, ‘Craigieburn Wood’ and ‘Roy’s Wife.’ The first, besides its intrinsic merit, has novelty; and the last has high merit as well as great celebrity; of the last I have the original, set as well as written by the lady † who composed it, and it is superior to any edition of the song which the public has yet seen.

No. 35.—Nothing.

No. 36 is the real tune of ‘Hughie Graham,’ as sung in some places; in others it is sung to a different and very pleasing little air, yet unknown to the world. I neglected to take down the notes when I met with it, and now it is out of my power. This air you will find in Oswald’s Collection, Book 8th, under the title ‘Drinan Duff.’

No. 37.—‘Laddie, lie near me,’ must *lie by me* for some time. I do not know the air; and until I am complete master of a tune, in my own singing (such as it is), I never can compose for it. My way is: I consider the poetic sentiment correspondent to my idea of the musical expression; then choose my theme; begin one stanza: when that is composed, which is generally the most difficult part of the business, I walk out, sit down now and then, look out for objects in nature around me that are in unison and harmony with the cogitations of my fancy and workings of my bosom; humming every now and then the air with the verses I have framed. When I feel my Muse beginning to jade, I retire to the solitary fireside of my study, and there commit my effusions to paper; swinging at intervals on the hind-legs of my elbow chair, by way of calling forth my own critical strictures as my pen goes on. Seriously, this, at home, is almost invariably my way. What damn’d egotism!

No. 38.—Nothing.

No. 39.—‘Highland Laddie.’ The old set will please a mere Scots ear best; and the new—an Italianised one. There is a third, and what Oswald calls ‘The Old Highland Laddie,’ which pleases me more than either of them; it is sometimes called ‘Jinglin Johnie;’ that being the

* When Thomson did insert the song (in his fourth volume), it was not to the tune requested by the Poet, but to ‘Willie was a wanton wag.’

† Mrs Grant of Carron.

air of an old humorous bawdy song of that name—you will find it in the *Museum*, 'I hae been at Crookieden,' &c. I would advise you, in this musical quandary, to offer up your prayers to the Muses for inspiring direction; and, in the meantime, waiting for this direction, bestow a libation to Bacchus; and there is not a doubt but you will hit on a judicious choice. *Probatum est.*

No. 40.—Nothing.

No. 41.—'O bonie Lass, will ye lie in a Barrack,' must infallibly have Scots verses.

No. 42.—Unknown.

No. 43.—'Wae's my heart that we should sunder.' Do you know a song [No. 231] in the *Museum*, 'Go fetch to me a pint o' wine, and fill it in a silver tassie?' It is a song of mine, and I think not a bad one. It precisely suits the measure of this air [No. 131, Johnson's *Museum*]; you might set it to this, and for an English song, take either 'With broken words,' &c., or 'Speak on, speak thus,' &c.: this last is the best; but remember I am no Dictator; *ad libitum* is the word.

Nos. 44 to 50.—Nothing.

No. 51.—'The bonie Brucket Lassie.' I enclose you a song to it, as I think it should be set, and with a better effect than the modulation in the *Museum*, where it first appeared, and whence everybody has borrowed it. The tune is a very early acquaintance of mine. The verses, if they deserve the name (in the *Museum*), are the work of a gentleman known by the name of 'Balloon Tytler.'

No. 52.—Nothing.

No. 53.—'Banks of the Dee.' Leave it out entirely; 'tis rank Irish; every other Irish air you have adopted is in the Scots taste; but, Langoolee!—why, it is no more like a Scots air than Lunardi's balloon is like Diogenes' tub. I grant you that it is pretty; but why don't you take also the 'Humors of Glen,' 'Captain O'Kean,' 'Coolin,' and many other Irish airs much more beautiful than it? Let me recommend to you, in place of this blackguard Irish jig, our beautiful Scots air, 'Saw ye na my Peggy,' a tune worth ten thousand of it; or 'Fy! let us a' to the Bridal,' worth twenty thousand of it.

No. 54.—Nothing.

No. 55.—'White Cockade.' I have forgot the Cantata* you allude to, as I kept no copy, and indeed did not know that it was in existence; however, I remember that none of the songs pleased myself, except the last—something about

Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please their priests.

But there is another song of mine, a composition of early life, in the *Museum*, beginning—

Nae gentle dames, tho' e'er sae fair,
which suits the measure, and has tolerable merit.

* See Vol. I., p. 245.

No. 56.—It suits best to make it, 'Whistle and I'll come t' ye, my lad.'

No. 57.—'Auld Sir Symon' I must beg you to keep ont, and put in its place 'The Quaker's Wife.'

No. 58.—Nothing.

No. 59.—'Dainty Davie' I have heard sung nineteen thousand, nine hundred, and ninety-nine times, and always with the chorus to the low part of the tune; and nothing (since a Highland wench in the Cowgate once bore me three bastards at a birth) has surprised me so much as your opinion on this subject. If it will not suit as I proposed, we will lay two of the stanzas together, and then make the chorus follow.

'Fee him, father, fee him.' I enclose you Fraser's set of this tune; when he plays it slow, in fact he makes it the language of despair. I shall here give you two stanzas in that style, merely to try if it will be any improvement. Were it possible, in singing, to give it half the pathos which Fraser gives it in playing, it would make an admirably pathetic song.* I do not give these verses for any merit they have. I composed them at the time in which 'Patie Allan's mither de'd—that was about the back o' midnight,' and by the lee-side of a bowl of punch, which had overset every mortal in company except the *Hautbois* and the Muse.

THOU HAST LEFT ME EVER.

TUNE—*Fee him, Father.*

Thou hast left me ever, Jamie! thou hast left me ever;
 Thou hast left me ever, Jamie! thou hast left me ever:
 Aften hast thou vowed that death only should us sever;
 Now thou'st left thy lass for aye—I maun see thee never, must
 Jamie,
 I'll see thee never.

Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie! thou hast me forsaken;
 Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie! thou hast me forsaken:
 Thou canst love anither jo, while my heart is breaking; sweetheart
 Soon my weary een I'll close—never mair to waken, eyes—more
 Jamie,
 Ne'er mair to waken! †

No. 60.—Nothing.

No. 61.—'Jocky said to Jenny' I would discard, and in its place

* 'I well recollect, about the year 1824, hearing Fraser play "Fee him, Father," on his benefit-night, in the Edinburgh theatre, "in the manner in which he had played it to Burns." It was listened to with breathless attention, as if the house had felt it to be a medium of communion with the spirit of the departed bard.'—R. C.

† Thomson set these verses to the air 'My boy, Tammy,' and substituted 'Tam' for 'Jamie' in order to shorten the line.

would put 'There's nae Luck about the House,' which is a very pleasant air, and positively the finest love-ballad in that style in the Scots, or perhaps any other language. 'When she cam ben, she bobbit,' is a more beautiful air by much than either of them, and in the *andante* way would make a charming sentimental ballad.

No. 62.—Nothing.

No. 63.—'Maggie Launder' is a good tune; but there is—I don't know what, of vulgarism about it; at least to me it has always that effect. There is an English song to which it is set in the *Museum* (No. 98).

Nos. 64, 65, 66.—Nothing.

No. 67.—'Saw ye my Father?' is one of my greatest favorites. The evening before last, I wandered out, and began a tender song, in what I think is its native style. I must premise, that the old way, and the way to give most effect, is to have no starting-note, as the fiddlers call it, but to burst at once into the pathos. Every country girl sings 'Saw ye my Father?' &c. See also in line third, 'I saw not your,' &c. This last to be sure, hurts the poetry ('I saw,' instead of 'I *saw*'), but I am speaking of the air.

My song is but just begun; and I should like, before I proceed, to know your opinion of it. I have sprinkled it with the Scots dialect, but it may be easily turned into correct English.

FRAGMENT.

TUNE—*Saw ye my Father?*

Where are the joys I hae met in the morning,
That danced to the lark's early sang?
Where is the peace that awaited my wandering,
At e'enin' the wild-woods amang?

Nae mair a winding the course o' yon river,
And marking sweet flowrets sae fair;
Nae mair I trace the light footsteps o' pleasure,
But sorrow and sad-sighing care.

Is it that simmer's forsaken our vallies,
And grim surly winter is near?
No, no, the bees humming round the gay roses
Proclaim it the pride o' the year.

Fain wad I hide, what I fear to discover,
Yet lang, lang too well hae I known;
A' that has caused the wreck in my bosom
Is, Jenny, fair Jenny, alone.

Time cannot aid me, my griefs are immortal,
 Not Hope dare a comfort bestow :
 Come then, enamor'd and fond of my anguish,
 Enjoyment I'll seek in my woe.

No. 68.—Nothing.

No. 69.—‘Todlin Hame.’ Urbani mentioned an idea of his which has long been mine, that this air is highly susceptible of pathos ; accordingly, you will soon hear him at your concert try it to a song of mine in the *Museum*, ‘Ye Banks and Braes o’ bonie Doon.’ Clarke has told me what a creature he is ; but if he will bring any more of our tunes from darkness into light, I will be pleased.

No. 70.—Nothing.

No. 71.—‘Geordie’s Byre.’ Call the tune so, for decency’s sake. I agree with you that the song will be better to want the stanza, ‘The primrose is o’er for the season.’ I’ll rather write a new song altogether than make this English. The sprinkling of Scotch in it, while it is but a sprinkling, gives it an air of rustic naïveté which time will rather increase than diminish.

Nos. 72, 73.—Nothing.

No. 74, and last.—‘Tranent Muir’ I am altogether averse to. The song is fine and eke the tune ; but it is altogether not of a piece with the rest of your pieces. Instead of it, allow me to mention a particular favourite of mine which you will find in the *Museum* : ‘I had a horse, and I had nae mair.’ It is a charming song, and I know the story of the ballad. One song more, and I have done—‘Auld Lang Syne.’ The air is but mediocre ; but the following song—the old song of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript, until I took it down from an old man’s singing, is enough to recommend any air :—

AULD LANG SYNE.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
 And never brought to min’ ?
 Should auld acquaintance be forgot.
 And days o’ lang syne ?

Chorus—For auld lang syne, my dear,
 For auld lang syne,
 We’ll tak a cup o’ kindness yet,
 For auld lang syne ! *

* Excepting that the stanza beginning

‘And surely ye’ll be your pint stoup,’

is removed to the end, this version is the same as that given in Vol. II., pp. 392, 393.

Now, I suppose, I have tired your patience fairly. You must, after all is over, have a number of ballads, properly so called. 'Gil Morice,' 'Tranent Muir,' 'M'Pherson's Farewell,' 'Battle of Sherifmuir,' or 'We ran and they ran' (I know the author of this charming ballad, and his history), 'Hardiknute,' 'Barbara Allan' (I can furnish a finer set of this tune than any that has yet appeared); and besides, do you know that I really have the old tune to which 'The Cherry and the Slæ' was sung, and which is mentioned as a well-known air in *Scotland's Complaint*—a book published before poor Mary's days? * It was then called 'The Banks of Helicon;' an old poem, which Pinkerton has brought to light. You will see all this in Tytler's *History of Scots Music*. The tune, to a learned ear, may have no great merit; but it is a great curiosity. I have a good many original things of this kind.

Good bye to ye!

R. B.

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 12th Sept. 1793.

A thousand thanks to you, my dear Sir, for your observations on the list of my songs. I am happy to find your ideas so much in unison with my own, respecting the generality of the airs, as well as the verses. About some of them we differ, but there is no disputing about hobby-horses. I shall not fail to profit by the remarks you make, and to reconsider the whole with attention.

'Dainty Davie' must be sung two stanzas together, and then the chorus; 'tis the proper way. I agree with you, that there may be something of pathos, or tenderness at least, in the air of 'Fee him, Father,' when performed with feeling; but a tender cast may be given almost to any lively air, if you sing it very slowly, expressively, and with serious words. I am, however, clearly and invariably for retaining the cheerful tunes joined to their own humorous verses, wherever the verses are passable. But the sweet song for 'Fee him, Father,' which you began about the back of midnight, I will publish as an additional one. Mr James Balfour, the king of good fellows, and the best singer of the lively Scottish ballads that ever existed, has charmed thousands of companies with 'Fee him, Father,' and with 'Todlin Hame' also, to the old words, which never should be disunited from either of these airs.† Some bacchanals I would wish to discard. 'Fy! let us a' to the Bridal,' for instance, is so coarse and vulgar, that I think it fit only to be sung

* The tune here alluded to by Burns, which was inserted in the fifth volume of Johnson, in connection with the 'Cherry and the Slæ,' was obtained by Mr Ritson from Edward Williams, a Welshman, who, it is thought, had probably noted it down from memory. The true air of the 'Banks of Helicon,' different from the above, was subsequently discovered in a manuscript now in the Advocates' Library, and was printed in Stenhouse's notes to Johnson's *Museum*.

† See an account of Balfour in Dr Robert Chambers's *Traditions of Edinburgh*.

in a company of drunken colliers ; and, 'Saw ye my Father' appears to me both indelicate and silly.

One word more with regard to your heroic ode. I think, with great deference to the poet, that a prudent general would avoid saying anything to his soldiers which might tend to make death more frightful than it is. 'Gory' presents a disagreeable image to the mind ; and to tell them, 'Welcome to your gory bed,' seems rather a discouraging address, notwithstanding the alternative which follows. I have shown the song to three friends of excellent taste, and each of them objected to this line, which emboldens me to use the freedom of bringing it again under your notice, I would suggest—

Now prepare for honour's bed,
Or for glorious victory !

G. T.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[8th] September 1793.

I am happy, my dear Sir, that my ode pleases you so much. Your idea 'honour's bed,' is, though a beautiful, a hackney'd idea ; so, if you please, we will let the line stand as it is. I have altered the song as follows :—

BANNOCKBURN.

ROBERT BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS ARMY.

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led ;
Welcome to your gory bed !
Or to glorious victorie !

Now 's the day, and now 's the hour ;
See the front o' battle lour ;
See approach proud Edward's power—
Edward ! Chains and Slavery !

Wha will be a traitor knave ?
Wha can fill a coward's grave ?
Wha sae base as be a slave ?
Traitor ! Coward ! turn and flee !

Wha for Scotland's King and Law
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Free-man stand, or Free-man fa'
Sodger ! Hero ! on wi' me !

By Oppression's woes and pains !
 By your sons in servile chains !
 We will drain our dearest veins,
 But they shall be—shall be free !

Lay the proud usurpers low !
 Tyrants fall in every foe !
 Liberty's in every blow !
 Forward ! let us Do or Die !

N.B.—I have borrowed the last stanza from the common stall edition of Wallace :—

‘ A false usurper sinks in every foe,
 And liberty returns with every blow ’—

a complet worthy of Homer. Yesterday you had enough of my correspondence. The post goes, and my head aches miserably. One comfort ! I suffer so much just now in this world for last night's debauch, that I shall escape scot-free for it in the world to come. Amen !

R. B.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[15th] September 1793.

‘ Who shall decide when Doctors disagree ? ’ ‘ My ode pleases me so much, that I cannot alter it. Your proposed alterations would, in my opinion, make it tame. I am exceedingly obliged to you for putting me on reconstructing it, as I think I have much improved it. Instead of ‘ Soger ! hero ! ’ I will have it to be ‘ Caledonian ! on wi’ me ! ’

I have scrutinised it over and over ; and to the world, some way or other, it shall go as it is. At the same time, it will not in the least hurt me tho’ you leave the song out altogether, and adhere to your first intention of adopting Logan’s verses.*

I have finished my song to ‘ The Grey Cock,’ and in English, as you will see. Your objection of a syllable too much for the expression of the air is just ; but, allow me to say that the mere dividing of a dotted crotchet into a crotchet and quaver, is not a great matter ; however, in that I have no pretensions to cope in judgment with you. Of the poetry I speak with confidence ; but the music is a business where I hint my ideas with the utmost diffidence.

The old verses have merit, though unequal, and are popular. My advice is to set the air to the old words, and let mine follow as English verses. Here they are :

* In Thomson’s second vol., published 1799, the song was set to the air ‘ Lewie Gordon,’ but in the third vol. it was reprinted, set to ‘ Hey, tuttie taitie,’ as Burns had wished.

WHERE ARE THE JOYS?

TUNE—*Saw ye my Father?*

Where are the joys I have met in the morning,
 That danc'd to the lark's early song?
 Where is the peace that awaited my wand'ring,
 At evening the wild-woods among?

No more a winding the course of yon river,
 And marking sweet flowrets so fair;
 No more I trace the light footsteps of pleasure,
 But sorrow and sad-sighing care.

Is it that summer's forsaken our vallies,
 And grim, surly winter is near?
 No, no, the bees humming round the gay roses,
 Proclaim it the pride of the year.

Fain would I hide, what I fear to discover,
 Yet long, long too well have I known:
 All that has caused this wreck in my bosom,
 Is Jenny, fair Jenny, alone.

Time cannot aid me, my griefs are immortal,
 Not * hope dare a comfort bestow:
 Come then, enamour'd and fond of my anguish,
 Enjoyment I'll seek in my woe.

Adieu, my dear Sir, the post goes, so I shall defer some other remarks
 until more leisure. R. B.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

September 1793.

I have been turning over some volumes of English songs, to find verses whose measures would suit the airs for which you have allotted me to find English songs. The following I picked up in an old collection, which will suit very well for 'Nancy's to the greenwood gane.' You must not, my dear Sir, expect all your English songs to have superlative merit, 'tis enough if they are passable:

* So in manuscript—hitherto always printed 'Nor.'

‘The other night, with all her charms,
My ardent passion crowning,
My Celia sank within my arms,
An equal transport owning,’ &c., &c.*

As for the air ‘Whistle and I’ll come to you, my lad,’ there is a fine English song for it in Ramsay’s *Tea-table Miscellany*, beginning ‘Ah, Chloe! thou treasure, thou joy of my breast.’ For ‘John Anderson, my jo,’ you have, also in Ramsay’s *Miscellany*, an excellent song beginning:

‘What means this niceness now of late?’

In the same *Miscellany* is not a bad song by Crawford to ‘Peggy, I must love thee,’ beginning:

‘Beneath a beech’s grateful shade.’

As for English verses to ‘Geordie’s Byre,’ take the following, altered a trifle from Ramsay:

‘O Mary, thy graces and glances,
Thy smiles so enchantingly gay,
And converse bewitchingly charming,
Bright wit and good humor display,’ &c.

Since I am in the way of amending and abridging, let me recommend the following abridgement of a beautiful poem of Hamilton’s, to suit ‘Tak your auld cloak about ye:’

‘Alas! the sunny hours are past,
The cheating scene, it will not last;
Let not the flatt’rer Hope persuade;
Ah, must I say, that it will fade!’ &c.

For ‘Willie was a wanton wag’ you have a song made on purpose, also by Hamilton, which you will find in Ramsay’s *Miscellany*, beginning:

‘Willy, ne’er enquire what end.’

English verses for ‘The tither morn, as I forlorn,’ you have in my song

‘The last time I came o’er the moor,
And left Maria’s dwelling.’

For ‘Todlin Hame,’ take the following old English song, which I daresay is but little known:

THE PRIMROSE.

TUNE—*Toddlin Hame.*

Dost ask me, why I send thee here,
This firstling of the infant year—
This lovely native of the vale,
That hangs so pensive and so pale?

* From Tom D’Ursey’s *Wit and Mirth*.

Look on its bending stalk, so weak
 That, each way yielding, doth not break,
 And see how aptly it reveals
 The doubts and fears a lover feels.

Look on its leaves of yellow hue
 Bepearl'd thus with morning dew,
 And these will whisper in thine ears
 'The sweets of love are wash'd with tears.'

N.B.—I have altered it a little.*

For 'Muirland Willie' you have, in Ramsay's *Tea-table*, an excellent song, beginning, 'Ah, why those tears in Nelly's eyes?' Then for 'The Collier's Dochter,' take the following old bacchanal:

DELUDED SWAIN, THE PLEASURE.

TUNE—*The Collier's Bonny Lassie.*

Deluded swain, the pleasure
 The fickle fair can give thee
 Is but a fairy treasure,
 Thy hopes will soon deceive thee.

The billows on the ocean,
 The breezes idly roaming,
 The clouds uncertain motion,
 They are but types of woman.

O! art thou not ashamed
 To dote upon a feature?
 If man thou wouldst be named,
 Despise the silly creature.

Go find an honest fellow;
 Good claret set before thee:
 Hold on till thou art mellow,
 And then to bed in glory.

The faulty line in 'Logan Water' I mend thus:

How can your flinty hearts enjoy
 The widow's tears, the orphan's cry?

* Not 'a little:' so much so that it is more Burns's than Ramsay's.

The song otherwise will pass. As to 'M'Gregoira Rua-Ruth,' you will see a song of mine to it, with a set of the air superior to yours in the *Museum*, Vol. ii., p. 181. The song begins :

'Raving winds around her blowing.'*

Your Irish airs are pretty, but they are rank Irish. If they were like the 'Banks of Banna,' for instance, though really Irish, yet in the Scottish taste, you might adopt them. Since you are so fond of Irish music, what say you to twenty-five of them in an additional number? We could easily find this quantity of charming airs; I will take care that you shall not want songs; and I assure you that you would find it the most saleable of the whole. If you do not approve of 'Roy's Wife,' for the music's sake, we shall not insert it. 'Deil tak the Wars,' is a charming song; so is, 'Saw ye my Peggy?' 'There's nae luck about the House,' well deserves a place. I cannot say that, 'O'er the hills and far awa' strikes me, as equal to your selection. 'This is no my ain house' is a great favorite air of mine; and if you will send me your set of it, I will task my muse to her highest effort. What is your opinion of, 'I hae laid a herrin in sawt?' I like it much. Your Jacobite airs are pretty; and there are many others of the same kind, pretty; but you have not room for them. You cannot I think, insert, 'Fye let us a' to the bridal,' to any other words than its own.

What pleases me, as simple and naïve, disgusts you as ludicrous and low. For this reason, 'Fye gie me my coggie Sirs;' 'Fye let us a' to the bridal,' with several others of that cast, are, to me, highly pleasing; while, 'Saw ye my Father or saw ye my Mother' delights me with its descriptive simple pathos. Thus, my song, 'Ken ye what Meg o' the mill has gotten?' pleases myself so much, that I cannot try my hand at another song to the air; so I shall not attempt it. I know you will laugh at all this; but, 'Ilka [every] man wears his belt his ain gait [own way].—Yours,

R. BURNS.

A public library had been established by subscription among the citizens of Dumfries in September 1792, and Burns, always a voracious reader, had been from the first one of its supporters. Before it was a week old, he had presented to it a copy of his Poems. He does not seem to have been a regular member till 5th March 1793, when 'the committee, by a great majority, resolved to offer to Mr Robert Burns a share in the library, free of any admission-money [10s. 6d.] and the quarterly contributions [2s. 6d.] to this date, out of respect and esteem for his abilities as a literary man; and they directed the secretary to make this known to Mr Burns as soon as possible, that the application which

* See Vol. II., p. 288.

they understood he was about to make in the ordinary way might be anticipated.' A few months later he was, by vote, appointed a member of committee.

On the 30th of September the poet presented four books to the library—Smollett's *Humphrey Clinker*, Mackenzie's *Julia de Roubigné*, Knox's *History of the Reformation*, and De Lolme on *The Constitution of England*. Mr M'Robert, sometime librarian, used to tell a curious story which he learned directly from Mr Thomson, subsequently Provost of Dumfries, with whom Burns had left the volumes. Early in the morning after the presentation was made, the poet came to Mr Thomson's bedside before he was up and asked anxiously to be permitted to see the copy of De Lolme, as he feared he had written something upon it 'which might bring him into trouble.' On the book being brought, he looked at the inscription which he had written on the back of the frontispiece—a portrait of the author—on the preceding night; and having procured some paste, he covered the inscription by pasting the adjoining fly-leaf to the frontispiece. The inscription is:

Mr Burns presents this book to the Library, and begs they will take it as a Creed of British Liberty--untill they find a better. R. B.

The leaves are now separate, and the inscription, in the Poet's best and boldest hand, is still as legible as on the day when he wrote it. The book is now the property of the Dumfries and Maxwelltown Mechanics' Library.

Burns's alarm lest the writing of this innocent-looking sentence should bring him into trouble is quite intelligible when it is remembered that at the trial of Mr Thomas Muir for sedition on the 30th of August of this year, part of the evidence tendered against him was the testimony of his servant, Ann Fisher, to the effect that he had purchased and distributed certain copies of Paine's *Rights of Man*. The stress laid upon that testimony by the Crown counsel had excited much remark. It might well appear to Burns, a Government officer, that his conduct at such a crisis ought to be in the highest degree circumspect. It was probably about the same time that, according to a well-authenticated tradition, he called upon his sometime neighbour, George Haugh, the blacksmith, and handing him copies of Paine's *Common Sense* and *Rights of Man*, desired him to keep these books for him,

as, if they were found in his own house, he would be a ruined man. Haugh readily accepted the trust, and the books remained long in the possession of his family.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[29th] October 1793.

Your last letter, my dear Thomson, was indeed laden with heavy news. Alas, poor Erskine !* The recollection that he was a coadjutor in your publication, has, till now, seared me from writing to you, or turning my thoughts on composing for you.

I am pleased that you are reconciled to the 'Quaker's Wife,' though by the by, an old highland gentleman and a deep antiquarian, tells me it is a Gaelic air, and known by the name of 'Leiger m' choss,' which name you may, if you think fit, prefix as the name of the tune. It bears that name in the west country, where there is still half a stanza of the song preserved, which I take to have been the chorus. The Gaelic phrase they have corrupted into Liggeram Coss :

Leiger m' choss, my bonie wee lass,
Leiger m' choss, my dearie ;
A' the lea-lang winter night,
Leiger m' choss, my dearie.

The following verses, I hope, will please you, as an English song to the air.

[The poet here transcribed his song, beginning 'Thine I am, my faithful Fair,' already given in Vol. III., p. 148.]

Your objection to the English song I proposed for 'John Anderson my jo,' is certainly just. The following is by an old acquaintance of mine, and I think has merit. You will see that each fifth line is made to suit the peculiar note you mention. The song was never in print, which I think is so much in your favor. The more original good poetry your collection contains, it certainly has so much the more merit:—

SONG.—BY GAVIN TURNBULL.

O condescend, dear, charming maid,
My wretched state to view ;
A tender swain to love betray'd,
And sad despair, by you.

* 'The Honourable A. Erskine, whose melancholy death Mr Thomson had communicated in an excellent letter, which he has suppressed.'—CURRIE. Mr Erskine was found drowned in the Firth of Forth, with his pockets full of stones. His suicide was believed to have been the result of gambling.

While here, all melancholy,
 My passion I deplore,
 Yet, urg'd by stern resistless fate,
 I love thee more and more.

I heard of love, and with disdain
 The urchin's power denied ;
 I laugh'd at every lover's pain,
 And mock'd them when they sighed :

But how my state is alter'd !
 Those happy days are o'er ;
 For all thy unrelenting hate,
 I love thee more and more.

O yield, illustrious beauty, yield,
 No longer let me mourn ;
 And though victorious in the field,
 Thy captive do not scorn.

Let generous pity warm thee,
 My wonted peace restore ;
 And, grateful, I shall bless thee still,
 And love thee more and more.

The following address of Turnbull's to the Nightingale will suit as an English song to the air, 'There was a lass and she was fair.' By the bye, Turnbull has a great many songs in MS. which I can command, if you like his manner. Possibly, as he is an old friend of mine, I may be prejudiced in his favor ; but I like some of his pieces very much.

THE NIGHTINGALE.

Thou sweetest minstrel of the grove,
 That ever tried the plaintive strain,
 Awake thy tender tale of love,
 And soothe a poor forsaken swain.

For though the muses deign to aid,
 And teach him smoothly to complain ;
 Yet Delia, charming, cruel maid,
 Is deaf to her forsaken swain.

All day, with fashion's gaudy sons,
 In sport she wanders o'er the plain :
 Their tales approves, and still she shuns
 The notes of her forsaken swain.

When evening shades obscure the sky,
 And bring the solemn hours again,
 Begin, sweet bird, thy melody,
 And soothe a poor forsaken swain.

I shall just transcribe another of Turnbull's,* which would go charmingly to 'Lewie Gordon.'

L A U R A.

Let me wander where I will,
By shady wood, or winding rill ;
Where the sweetest may-born flowers
Paint the meadows, deck the bowers ;
Where the linnet's early song
Echoes sweet the woods among :
Let me wander where I will,
Laura haunts my fancy still.

If at rosy dawn I chuse
To indulge the smiling muse ;
If I court some cool retreat,
To avoid the noon-tide heat ;
If beneath the moon's pale ray,
Through unfrequented wilds I stray ;
Let me wander where I will,
Laura haunts my fancy still.

When at night the drowsy god
Waves his sleep-compelling rod,
And to fancy's wakeful eyes
Bids celestial visions rise ;
While with boundless joy I rove
Through the fairyland of love :
Let me wander where I will,
Laura haunts my fancy still.

The rest of your letter I shall answer at some other opportunity.—
Yours, R. B.

MR JAMES JOHNSON, ENGRAVER, EDINBURGH.†

[DUMFRIES, Oct. 1793.]

MY DEAR FRIEND—I [have not lately had an opportunity] of writing to you : your songs much [occupy my thoughts, but I am worried by un]avoidable hurry. I am [now busy] correcting a new edition [of my poems, and] this, with my ordinary [business, finds me] in full employment.

* Gavin Turnbull, a native of Roxburghshire and a factory worker, published *Poetical Essays* (Glasgow, 1788). Burns may have made his acquaintance in Kilmarnock, where he was living in 1786. He was a member of Sutherland's dramatic company at Dumfries, and after 1792 went to America.

† From a fragment in the British Museum. The passages within brackets were supplied, from conjecture, by Mr Scott Douglas.

[At your leisure, if you] choose, get somebody to class the first lines of the songs alphabetically, and I will draw out an Index of Author's names, as soon as you send the list, and return [corrected proofs of the songs.]

A valued musical acquaintance of [mine in the neighbourhood] of Ayr is thinking [of publishing a] Collection of Strathspeys and Reels. [I have recommended him to you in this matter. Engage with him on the] same terms as you would another; but as you will be promptly paid, let him have your lowest terms. Write to me as to this matter in a post or two at farthest.

As to our *Musical Museum*, I have better than a dozen songs by me for the fifth volume. Send with Mr Clarke when he comes to you, [whatever new airs you have] got. If we cannot finish the fifth volume any other way, what would you think of Scotch words to some beautiful Irish airs? In the meantime, at your leisure, give a copy of the *Museum* to my worthy friend, Mr Peter Hill, Bookseller, to bind for me interleaved with blank leaves, exactly as he did the Laird of Glenriddell's, that I [may insert every anecdote I can learn, together with my own criticisms and remarks on the songs. A copy of this kind I shall leave with you, the editor, to publish at some after period, by way of making the *Museum* a book famous to the end of time, and you renowned for ever.—In haste, yours,

R. B.]

TO MR JAMES JOHNSON, EDINBURGH.

[DUMFRIES, Oct. 1793.]

I was much obliged to you, my dear Friend, for making me acquainted with Gow.* He is a modest, intelligent, worthy fellow; besides his being a man of great genius in his way. I have spent many happy hours with him, in the short while he has been here.

Why did you not send me those tunes and verses that Clarke and you cannot make out? Let me have them as soon as possible, that while he is at hand, I may settle the matter with him. He and I have been very busy providing and laying out materials for your fifth volume. I have got about a dozen by me. If you can conveniently, let me have half-a-dozen copies of your fourth volume: I want no more. As soon as the bound copy of all the volumes is ready, take the trouble of forwarding it. In haste, yours ever,

R. B.

IMPROMPTU

ON MRS RIDDEL'S BIRTHDAY, 4TH NOVEMBER 1793.

Old winter, with his frosty beard,
Thus once to Jove his prayer preferred:—
'What have I done, of all the year,
To bear this hated doom severe?

* Supposed to have been a brother of Neil Gow, the fiddler and composer.

My cheerless suns no pleasure know ;
 Night's horrid car drags, dreary, slow ;
 My dismal months no joys are crowning,
 But spleeny, English hanging, drowning.

'Now Jove, for once be mighty civil :
 To counterbalance all this evil
 Give me, and I've no more to say,
 Give me Maria's natal day !
 That brilliant gift will so enrich me,
 Spring, Summer, Autumn, cannot match me.'
 'Tis done !' says Jove ; so ends my story,
 And Winter once rejoic'd in glory.

Burns's readiness at this style of composition seemed almost miraculous to his friends. Many of his epigrams, epitaphs, and graces were impromptus, designed only to raise a laugh at the moment. A Mr Ladyman, an English commercial traveller, alighting one day at Brownhill Inn, in Dumfriesshire, was told that he would have to dine with a company in which was Robert Burns. The landlord, who presided at the dinner, was named Bacon, and bacon was one of the items in the menu. Some of the party, the poet included, would rather have dispensed with the host's presence. The latter had retired for a few minutes to arrange for a fresh supply of toddy, when some one called upon Burns to prove to the young Englishman that he was really Burns the poet, by composing a verse on the spur of the moment ; and he, with hardly an interval for reflection, produced the following :

'At Brownhill we always get dainty good cheer
 And plenty of bacon each day in the year ;
 We've a' thing that's nice, and mostly in season—
 But why always *Bacon* ?—come, tell me a reason ?' *

* From Mr Ladyman's own report of the incident, in 1824.

'At the sale of the effects of Mr Bacon, Brownhill Inn, after his death in 1825, his snuff-box, being found to bear the inscription :

ROBT. BURNS,
 OFFICER
 OF
 THE EXCISE

—although only a horn plainly mounted with silver, brought £5. It was understood to have been presented by Burns to Bacon, with whom he had spent many a merry night.'—*Ayrshire Monthly News-Letter*, April 5, 1844.

Another story of the same kind told by an acquaintance of Burns runs thus: Nicol and Masterton had come to spend a week of their vacation at Dumfries, for the purpose of enjoying the society of their friend Burns. The scene of the 'Peck o' Maut' was renewed every evening in the Globe Tavern. Excepting, indeed, that Burns attended to his duty in the forenoon, and that Willie and Allan took a rattling walk before dinner, to give themselves an appetite, it might be said that the week was one unbroken round of merry-making. One day, when they were to dine at the Globe, they found, on coming in at three, that no dinner had been ordered. As Burns had taken on himself this duty, the fault was his, and the other two gentlemen were wroth with him accordingly. 'Just like him,' quoth Mrs Hyslop; 'ye might hae kent that *he's* ne'er to lippen [trust] to.' 'Well, but can we have anything to eat? You know we must dine somehow.' Mrs Hyslop, or as Burns called her, Meg, was not without resource. There was a tup's-head in the pot for John and herself; and, if they pleased, they might have the first of it. When it had been disposed on the board, Nicol said, 'Burns, we fine you for your neglect of arrangements: you give us something new as a grace.' The poet instantly, with appropriate gesture and tone, said:

'O Lord, when hunger pinches sore,
Do Thou stand us in stead,
And send us from Thy bounteous store,
A tup- or wether-head. Amen.'

They fell to and enjoyed their fare prodigiously. 'Now, Burns, we've not done with you. We fine you again. Return thanks.' He as promptly responded with:

'O Lord, since we have feasted thus,
Which we so little merit,
Let Meg now take away the flesh,
And Jock bring in the spirit. Amen.'

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 7th November 1793.

MY GOOD SIR—After so long a silence it gave me peculiar pleasure to recognise your well known hand, for I had begun to be apprehensive

that all was not well with you. I am happy to find, however, that your silence did not proceed from that cause, and that you have got among the ballads once more.

I have to thank you for your English song to 'Leiger m' choss,' which I think extremely good, although the colouring is warm. Your friend Mr Turnbull's songs have doubtless considerable merit; and as you have the command of his manuscripts, I hope you may find out some that will answer as English songs, to the airs yet unprovided.

G. T.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

December 1793.

Tell me how you like the following verses to the tune of, 'Jo Janet.'

MY SPOUSE NANCY.

TUNE—*My Jo Janet.*

'Husband, husband, cease your strife
Nor longer idly rave, sir;
Tho' I am your wedded wife,
Yet I am not your slave, sir.'

'One of two must still obey,
Nancy, Nancy,
Is it man or woman, say,
My spouse Nancy?'

'If 'tis still the lordly word,
Service and obedience;
I'll desert my sov'reign lord,
And so, good-bye allegiance!'

'Sad will I be, so bereft,
Nancy, Nancy;
Yet I'll try to make a shift,
My spouse Nancy.'

'My poor heart then break it must,
My last hour I'm near it:
When you lay me in the dust,
Think, think how you will bear it.'

‘I will hope and trust in Heaven,
 Nancy, Nancy ;
 Strength to bear it will be given,
 My spouse Nancy.’

‘Well, sir, from the silent dead,
 Still I’ll try to daunt you ;
 Ever round your midnight bed
 Horrid sprites shall haunt you.’

‘I’ll wed another, like my dear,
 Nancy, Nancy ;
 Then all hell will fly for fear,
 My spouse, Nancy.’*

Yours—

R. B.

TO JOHN M‘MURDO, ESQ.

DUMFRIES, *December 1793.*

SIR—It is said that we take the greatest liberties with our greatest friends, and I pay myself a very high compliment in the manner in which I am going to apply the remark. I have owed you money longer than ever I owed it to any man. Here is Ker’s account, and here are six guineas; and now, I don’t owe a shilling to man—or woman either. But for these damned dirty, dog’s-ear’d little pages, I had done myself the honor to have waited on you long ago. Independent of the obligations your hospitality has laid me under; the consciousness of your superiority in the rank of man and gentleman, of itself was fully as much as I could ever make head against; but to owe you money too, was more than I could face.

I think I once mentioned something of a collection of Scots songs I have for some years been making: I send you a perusal of what I have got together. I could not conveniently spare them above five or six days, and five or six glances of them will probably more than suffice you. A very few of them are my own. When you are tired of them, please leave them with Mr Clint, of the King’s-arms. There is not another copy of the collection in the world; and I should be sorry that any unfortunate negligence should deprive me of what has cost me a good deal of pains.

R. B.

* Dr Currie here added the song, ‘Wilt thou be my Dearie?’ It does not appear in the original manuscript. It will be found afterwards in a different connection.

TO THE SAME.

SIR—I just finished the inclosed, and I do my Ballad the honor to send you it. I shall be through your country-side in about the middle of next week ; if you have an hour to spare for so trifling a purpose.

[R. B.]

From an early period of his life, Burns had dabbled in verse of a coarsely humorous or Fescennine kind. In Scotland, notwithstanding the grave and religious character which the people have borne for centuries, there is extant a wonderful quantity of indecorous traditionary verse expressive of a profound sense of the ludicrous in regard to sexual relations.* Such things, usually kept from public view, were trolled out in jovial companies such as Burns occasionally frequented. Men laughed at them for the moment, and forgot them next morning. But Burns was an enthusiastic student of the Scottish poetry of the past ; he could not, if he would, have neglected this rich and characteristic department. When he was specially struck by any free-spoken ditty of the old school, he would scribble it down, and transfer it to a commonplace-book. In time, what he thus collected he was led to imitate, apparently for no other end than to amuse his merry companions in their convivial moments. We have seen that, in starting his second commonplace-book in the spring of 1787, he designed to commit to it a few of his compositions of this class. He afterwards made copies of them, which he would, with his usual heedlessness, though not with absolute recklessness, allow to pass into the hands of his friends. We now see from his letter to Mr M'Murdo that he had at length transcribed them into a volume, which he would occasionally intrust to the keeping of a friend.

* 'In Britain, and particularly in reading Scotland, you know that the library of the peasant is composed chiefly of such coarse actions as the *Exploits of George Buchanan*, the histories of *John Cheep the Chapman*, *Leper the Tailor*, *Lothian Tom*, *Paddy from Cork*, the *Creelman's Courtship*, *Simple John and his Twelve Misfortunes*, and such like—all of them saturated with indecency, and forming a library of facetiæ, which, in spite of the cant of the day about the moral and religious character of the country, prove how much the national humour and peculiarities of the people have been and still are imbued with coarseness and indelicacy.

'In Prussia, I am inclined to think that the vulgar taste is different ; at least if the selection which I made be taken as a criterion. It is clear that there is far less love of the prurient and coarsely humorous about the German people, than among either the French or the British.'—*Strang's Germany in 1831.*

The facts cannot be gainsaid. Burns transcribed a great many rough old Scottish songs, and wrote a good many Cloaciniads, as he called them. But he neither copied nor composed anything of the kind for publication. There can be no question that it was mainly his strong sense of the ludicrous that prompted him to indulge in these Fescennine exercises. He was, moreover, a rebel against that which his successor Carlyle called giganity; it was as natural in his case as in Rabelais' that revolt against convention should take on this hue at times. In his familiar allusions to Scriptural characters and incidents he was simply following an example set to him in the common conversation of his countrymen; for certain it is that the piety of the old Scotch people did not exclude a good deal of unconscious profanity. There is a jocular ballad by Burns, of the kind described, which he exhibited to his friends as if designed for the press, with a prose note from a supposititious publisher: 'Courteous Reader—The following is certainly the production of one of those licentious, ungodly (too much abounding in this our day) wretches, who take it as a compliment to be called wicked, provided you allow them to be witty. Pity it is, that while so many tar-barrels in the country are empty, and so many gibbets untenanted, some example is not made of these profligates.' Unluckily, Burns's collection of these facetiæ, including his own essays in the same walk, which he had kept under lock and key in Dumfries, fell after his death into the hands of one of those publishers who would sacrifice the highest interests of humanity to put an additional penny into their own purses; and, to the lasting grief of all the friends of the poet, a mean-looking volume, entitled *The Merry Muses of Caledonia*, was printed from it about the year 1800. Burns's name is not on the title-page, but it is on the title-pages of several so-called subsequent editions of the book, which are largely made up of the rakings of (chiefly pre-Burns) indecent literature, between which and the poet no connection whatever can be traced.

With his usual anxiety to communicate his new compositions to his friends, Burns sent copies of 'Bruce's Address' to various acquaintances on the Liberal side of politics, whom he thought likely to be pleased with it. We find him alluding to it incidentally in letters during the next few weeks.

TO CAPTAIN —.*

DUMFRIES, 5th December 1793.

SIR—Heated as I was with wine yesternight, I was perhaps rather seemingly impertinent in my anxious wish to be honored with your acquaintance. You will forgive it—it was the impulse of heart-felt respect. ‘He is the father of Scottish county reform, and is a man who does honor to the business, at the same time the business does honor to him,’ said my worthy friend Glenriddel to somebody by me, who was talking of your coming to this country with your corps. ‘Then,’ I said, ‘I have a woman’s longing to take him by the hand, and say to him, “Sir, I honor you as a man to whom the interests of humanity are dear, and as a patriot to whom the rights of your country are sacred.”’

In times like these, Sir, when our commoners are barely able by the glimmering of their own twilight understandings to scrawl a frank, and when lords are what gentlemen would be ashamed to be, to whom shall a sinking country call for help? To the independent country gentleman. To him who has too deep a stake in his country not to be in earnest for her welfare; and who, in the honest pride of man, can view with equal contempt the insolence of office and the allurements of corruption.

I mentioned to you a Scots ode or song [‘Scots wha hae’] I had lately composed, and which, I think, has some merit. Allow me to enclose it. When I fall in with you at the theatre, I shall be glad to have your opinion of it. Accept of it, Sir, as a very humble but most sincere tribute of respect from a man who, dear as he prizes poetie fame, yet holds dearer an independent mind. I have the honor to be, &c.,

R. B.

TO ALEXANDER FRASER TYTLER, ESQ., EDINBURGH.

SIR—A poor caitiff, driving as I am at this moment with an excise quill, at the rate of ‘Devil take the hindmost,’ is ill qualified to round the period of gratitude, or swell the pathos of sensibility. Gratitude, like some other amiable qualities of the mind, is now-a-days so abused by impostors, that I have sometimes wished that the project of that sly dog Momus, I think it is, had gone into effect—planting a window in the breast of man. In that case, when a poor fellow comes, as I do at this moment, before his benefactor, tongue-tied with the sense of these very obligations, he would have nothing to do but place himself in front of his friend, and lay bare the workings of his bosom.

I again trouble you with another, and my last, parcel of manuscripts. I am not interested in any of these; blot them at your pleasure. I am much indebted to you for taking the trouble of correcting the press work.

* Probably, Captain Robertson of Lude.

One instance, indeed, may be rather unlucky ; if the lines to Sir John Whitefoord are printed : they ought to end—

‘And tread the *shadowy* path to that dark world unknown’—

‘shadowy,’ instead of ‘dreary,’ as I believe it stands at present. I wish this could be noticed in the Errata. This comes of writing, as I generally do, from the memory.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your deeply indebted humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

6th Decr. 1793.

TO MRS DUNLOP OF DUNLOP.

DUMFRIES, 15th Dec. 1793.

MY DEAR FRIEND—As I am in a complete Decemberish humour, gloomy, sullen, stupid, as even the deity of Dulness herself could wish, I shall not drawl out a heavy letter with a number of heavier apologies for my late silence. Only one I shall mention, because I know you will sympathize in it ; these four months, a sweet little girl, my youngest child has been so ill that every day, a week or less threatened to terminate her existence. There had much need be many pleasures annexed to the state of husband and father, for God knows they have many peculiar cares. I cannot describe to you the anxious, sleepless hours these ties have frequently given me. I see a train of helpless little folks ; me and my exertions all their stay ; and on what a brittle thread does the life of man hang ! If I am nipt off at the command of fate, even in all the vigour of manhood as I am—such things happen every day—gracious God ! what would become of my little flock ! ’Tis here that I envy your people of fortune. A father on his deathbed, taking an everlasting leave of his children, has indeed woe enough ; but the man of competent fortune leaves his sons and his daughters independency and friends ; while I—but I shall run distracted if I think any longer on the subject !

To leave off talking of the matter so gravely, I shall sing with the old Scots ballad :—

‘O that I had ne’er been married,
I would never had nae care ;
Now, I’ve gotten a wife and weans,
And they cry “crowdie” evermair :
Crowdie ance, crowdie twice,
Crowdie three times in a day ;
An’ ye crowdie ony mair
Ye’ll crowdie a’ my meal away.’

December 24th.

We have had a brilliant theatre here, this season ; only, as all other business has, it experiences a stagnation of trade from the epidemical

complaint of the country—*want of cash*. I mention our theatre merely to lug in an occasional 'Address' which I wrote for the benefit night of one of the actresses, which is as follows :

ADDRESS

SPOKEN BY MISS FONTENELLE ON HER
BENEFIT NIGHT.

Wednesday, December 4th, 1793, at the Theatre, Dumfries

Still anxious to secure your partial favor,
And not less anxious sure this night than ever,
A Prologue, Epilogue, or some such matter,
'Twould vamp my bill, said I, if nothing better ;
So, sought a Poet, roosted near the skies,
Told him, I came to feast my curious eyes ;
Said, nothing like his works was ever printed ;
And last, my prologue-business slyly hinted.
'Ma'am, let me tell you,' quoth my man of rhymes.
'I know your bent—these are no laughing times :
Can you—but Miss, I own I have my fears,
Dissolve in pause—and sentimental tears—
With laden sighs, and solemn-rounded sentence ;
Rouse from his sluggish slumbers, fell Repentance ;
Paint Vengeance as he takes his horrid stand,
Waving on high the desolating brand,
Calling the storms to bear him o'er a guilty land !'

I could no more—askance the creature eyeing,
D'ye think, said I, this face was made for crying ?
I'll laugh, that's poz—nay more, the world shall know it ;
And so, your servant ! gloomy Master Poet !
Firm as my creed, Sirs, 'tis my fix'd belief,
That Misery's another word for Grief :
I also think—so may I be a bride !
That so much laughter, so much life enjoy'd.

Thou man of crazy care and ceaseless sigh,
Still under bleak misfortune's blasting eye ;
Doom'd to that sorest task of man alive—
To make three guineas do the work of five :

Laugh in Misfortune's face—the beldam witch !
 Say, you 'll be merry, tho' you can't be rich.
 Thou other man of care, the wretch in love,
 Who long with jiltish arts and airs hast strove ;
 Who, as the boughs all temptingly project,
 Measur'st in desperate thought—a rope—thy neck—
 Or, where the beetling cliff o'erhangs the deep,
 Peerest to meditate the healing leap :
 Wouldst thou be cur'd, thou silly, moping elf,
 Laugh at her follies—laugh e'en at thyself :
 Learn to despise those frowns now so terrific,
 And love a kinder—that 's your grand specific.

To sum up all, be merry, I advise ;
 And as we 're merry, may we still be wise.

25th, Christmas morning.

This, my much loved friend, is a morning of wishes : accept mine—so Heaven hear me as they are sincere ! that blessings may attend your steps, and affliction know you not ! In the charming words of my favorite author, *The Man of Feeling*, 'May the great spirit bear up the weight of thy gray hairs ; and blunt the arrow that brings them rest !'

Now that I talk of authors, how do you like Cowper ? Is not the 'Task' a glorious poem ? The religion of the 'Task,' bating a few scraps of Calvinistic divinity, is the religion of God and Nature : the religion that exalts, that enobles man. Were not you to send me your 'Zeluco' in return for mine ? Tell me how you like my marks and notes through the book. I would not give a farthing for a book, unless I were at liberty to blot it with my criticisms.

I have lately collected, for a friend's perusal, all my letters ; I mean those which I first sketched, in a rough draught, and afterwards wrote out fair. On looking over some old musty papers, which from time to time, I had parcelled by, as trash that were scarce worth preserving, and which yet at the same time I did not care to destroy ; I discovered many of these rude sketches, and have written, and am writing them out, in a bound MS. for my friend's library. As I wrote always to you the rhapsody of the moment, I cannot find a single scroll to you, except one, about the commencement of our acquaintance. If there were any possible conveyance, I would send you a perusal of my book. R. B.

Along with the above-printed Address or Prologue was sent this note : *

* The original draft of the note to Miss Fontenelle is now in the possession of Mr Alfred Morrison, London.

TO MISS FONTENELLE.


Enclosed is the Address, such as it is, and may it be a prologue to an overflowing house. If all the town put together have half the ardor for your success and welfare of my individual wishes, my prayer will most certainly be granted.

Were I a man of gallantry and fashion, strutting and fluttering on the foreground of the picture of Life, making the speech to a lovely young girl might be construed to be one of the doings of All Powerful Love; but you will be surprised, my dear Madam, when I tell you that it is not Love, nor even Friendship, but sheer Avarice. In all my justlings and jumbings, windings and turnings, in life, disgusted at every corner, as a man of the least taste and sense must be, with vice, folly, arrogance, impertinence, nonsense, and stupidity, my soul has ever, involuntarily and instinctively, selected as it were for herself a few whose regard, whose esteem [*whose heart (deleted)*], with a *Miser's Avarice* she wished to appropriate and preserve. It is truly from this cause, *ma chère Mademoiselle*, that any the least service I can be of to you gives me real pleasure. God knows I am a powerless individual. And when I thought on my friends, many a heartache it has given me! But if Miss Fontenelle will accept this honest compliment to her [*lovely person (deleted)*] personal charms, amiable manners, and gentle heart, from a man too proud to flatter, though too poor to have his compliments of any consequence, it will sincerely oblige her *anxious* Friend, and most devoted humble [servant].

R. B.

CHAPTER II.

DUMFRIES (1794–1795).

HE New Year opened uneventfully for Burns. His irritation at the course politics were taking was not apparently mollified by the ill-success of Great Britain and her allies in the tussle with France; perhaps it only loosened his tongue a little. We find him at the opening of the year thinking out reforms in the administration of the Excise, and for a month or two comparatively idle so far as composition was concerned.

TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

DUMFRIES, 12th Jan. 1794.

MY LORD—Will your Lordship allow me to present you with the inclosed little composition of mine, as a small tribute of gratitude for that acquaintance with which your have been pleased to honor me. Independent of my enthusiasm as a Scotsman, I have rarely met with any thing in history which interests my feelings as a man, equal with the story of Bannockburn. On the one hand, a cruel, but able usurper, leading on the finest army in Europe to extinguish the last spark of freedom among a greatly-daring, and greatly-injured, people; on the other hand, the desperate relics of a gallant nation, devoting themselves to rescue their bleeding country, or perish with her.

Liberty! thou art a prize truly, and indeed invaluable!—for never canst thou be too dearly bought!

If my little Ode has the honor of your Lordship's approbation, it will gratify my highest ambition. I have the honor to be, &c. R. B.

TO CAPTAIN MILLER, DALSWINTON.

[January 1794.]

DEAR SIR—The following Ode is on a subject which I know you by no means regard with indifference. O Liberty,

Thou mak'st the gloomy face of Nature gay,
Giv'st beauty to the sun, and pleasure to the day.

It does me so much good to meet with a man whose honest bosom glows with the generous enthusiasm, the heroic daring of liberty, that I could not forbear sending you a composition of my own on the subject, which I really think is in my best manner. I have the honor to be, dear Sir,
ROBT. BURNS.

TO ROBERT GRAHAM, ESQ., OF FINTRY.

[Jan. 1794.]

SIR—I am going to venture on a subject which, I am afraid, may appear, *from me*, improper; but as I do it from the best of motives, if you should not approve of my ideas, you will forgive them.

Economy of the public monies is, I know, highly the wish of your honorable board; and any hint conducive thereto which may occur to any, though the meanest individual in your service, it is surely his duty to communicate it.

I have been myself accustomed to labor, and have no notion that a servant of the public should eat the bread of idleness; so, what I have long digested, and am going to propose, is the reduction of one of our Dumfries divisions. Not only in these unlucky times, but even in the highest flush of business, my division, though by far the heaviest, was mere trifling—the others, still less. I would plan the reduction as thus: Let the second division be annihilated, and be divided among the others. The duties in it are, two chandlers, a common brewer, and some victuallers; these, with some tea and spirit stocks, are the whole division; it is the idlest of us all. That I may seem impartial, I shall willingly take under my charge the common brewer and the victuallers. The tea and spirit stocks divide between the Bridgend and Dumfries second divisions. They have at present but very little, *comparatively*, to do, and are quite adequate to the task.

I assure you, Sir, that by my plan the duties will be equally well discharged, and thus an officer's appointment saved to the public. You must remark one thing—that our common brewers are, every man of them in Dumfries completely and unexceptionably, fair traders. One or two rascally creatures are in the Bridgend division; but besides being nearly ruined, as all smugglers deserve, by fines and forfeitures, their business is on the most trifling scale you can fancy.

I must beg of you, Sir, should my plan please you, that you will

conceal my hand in it, and give it as your own thought. My warm and worthy friend, Mr Corbet, may think me an impertinent intermeddler in his department; and Mr Findlater, my supervisor, who is not only one of the first, if not the very first, of excisemen in your service, but is also one of the worthiest fellows in the universe; he, I know, would feel hurt at it, and as he is one of my most intimate friends, you can easily figure how it would place me to have my plan known to him.

For further information on the subject, permit me to refer you to a young beginner whom you lately sent among us—Mr Andrew Pearson, a gentleman that I am happy to say, from manner, abilities, and attention, promises, indeed to be a great acquisition to the service of your honorable board.

This is a letter of business; in a future opportunity I may, and most certainly will, trouble you with one in my own way, *à la Parnasse*.

I have the honor to be, Sir, your much indebted and ever grateful servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

P.S.—I forgot to mention that, if my plan takes, let me recommend to your humanity and justice the present officer of the second division. He is a very good officer, and is burdened with a family of small children, which, with some debts of early days, crush him much to the ground.

R. B.

TO MR ALEXANDER FINDLATER,
SUPERVISOR OF EXCISE, DUMFRIES.

DUMFRIES [*Feb.*], 1794.

SIR—Enclosed are the two schemes. I would not have troubled you with the collector's one, but for suspicion lest it be not right. Mr Erskine promised me to make it right, if you will have the goodness to shew him how. As I have no copy of the scheme for myself, and the alterations being very considerable from what it was formerly, I hope that I shall have access to this scheme I send you, when I come to face up my new books. *So much for schemes*.—And that no scheme to betray a FRIEND, or mislead a STRANGER; to seduce a YOUNG GIRL, or rob a HEN-ROOST; to subvert LIBERTY, or bribe an EXCISEMAN; to disturb the GENERAL ASSEMBLY, or annoy a GOSSIPING; to overthrow the credit of ORTHODOXY, or the authority of OLD SONGS; to oppose *your wishes*, or frustrate *my hopes*—MAY PROSPER—is the sincere wish and prayer of

ROBT. BURNS.

Mrs Riddel had gone to London in the April of 1793, and spent many months there. 'During the season,' she says, 'I did so many things that I ought not to have done, and left undone so many things that I ought to have done, that at the expiration of

that time there was no health left in me.' In London she had to part with her husband, who was suddenly called away to attend to his affairs in the West Indies; and she was now living alone at Woodley Park. To quote her letter to Smellie* (November 1793): 'I am as chaste and domestic, but perhaps not quite so industrious, as Penelope in the absence of her hero. I resemble rather the lilies of the field: "I toil not, neither do I spin;" but I read, I write, I sing, and contrive to wile away the time as pleasantly as any sociable being like myself can do in a state of solitude, and in some measure of mortification. . . . I shall,' she adds, 'write you more fully in my next as to the nature of my present pursuits, and how I found Burns and the other friends here you left behind, for they were not few, I assure you.'

TO MRS RIDDEL.

DEAR MADAM—I meant to have called on you yesternight, but as I edged up to your box-door, the first object which greeted my view, was one of those lobster-coated puppies, sitting like another dragon, guarding the Hesperian fruit. On the conditions and capitulations you so obligingly offer, I shall certainly make my weather-beaten rustic pliz a part of your box-furniture on Tuesday; when we may arrange the business of the visit.

* * * * *

Among the profusion of idle compliments, which insidious craft, or unmeaning folly, incessantly offer at your shrine—a shrine, how far exalted above such adoration—permit me, were it but for rarity's sake, to pay you the honest tribute of a warm heart, and an independent mind; and to assure you, that I am, thou most amiable, and most accomplished of thy sex, with the most respectful esteem, and fervent regard, thine, &c.,

R. B.

A regiment was stationed at this time in Dumfries, and the officers were, as a matter of course, 'loyal,' and talked the 'loyalty' of the day. Burns, dissenting from much that was involved in that 'loyalty,' disliked those by whom it was expressed. He thought, moreover, that he had good reason to believe that it was in consequence of reports from these gentlemen that his good-will to the government had been called in question by the Board of Excise. Mrs Basil Montagu, who, as

* *Memoirs of William Smellie*, by Robert Kerr (2 vols. 8vo, Edinburgh, 1811).

Miss Benson, was now visiting Miss Helena Craik of Arbigland, long after stated to Allan Cunningham that she was at a ball given by the Caledonian Hunt, and had stood up as the partner of a young officer, when the whisper of 'There's Burns!' ran through the assembly. 'I looked round,' says the lady, 'and there he was—his bright dark eyes full upon me. I shall never forget that look; it was one that gave me no pleasure. He soon left the meeting. I saw him next day. He would have passed me; but I spoke. I took his arm and said: "Come, you must see me home." "Gladly, madam," said he; "but I'll not go down the plainstones, lest I have to share your company with some of those *epauletted puppies* with whom the street is full."'

While burning with this ill-suppressed wrath, he was unfortunate enough one evening to give an officer an advantage over him through an imprudent expression which he let drop. It was in a private company. Burns gave as a toast: 'May our success in the present war be equal to the justice of our cause,' which Captain Dods, the officer in question, interpreted as an innuendo against the Government, and took up warmly. Next morning Burns wrote the following letter

TO MR SAMUEL CLARK, JUNR., DUMFRIES.*

Sunday Morning.

DEAR SIR—I was, I know, drunk last night, but I am sober this morning. From the expressions Capt. Dods made use of to me, had I had nobody's welfare to care for but my own, we should certainly have come, according to the manners of the world, to the necessity of murdering one another about the business. The words were such as, generally, I believe, end in a brace of pistols; but I am still pleased to think that I did not ruin the peace and welfare of a wife and a family in a drunken squabble. Farther you know that the report of certain political opinions being mine, has already once before brought me to the brink of destruction. I dread last night's business may be misrepresented in the same way. YOU, I beg, will take care to prevent it. I tax your wish for Mr Burns's welfare with the task of waiting as soon as possible, on every gentleman who was present, and state this to him, and, as you please, shew him this letter. What, after all, was the obnoxious toast? 'May our success in the present war be equal to the justice of our cause'

* Samuel Clark, junior, was a man of considerable social and professional position in Dumfries, where he died in 1814 at the age of forty-five. On his tombstone in St Michael's Churchyard he is described as 'Samuel Clark, junior, conjunct Commissary Clerk, and Clerk of the Peace for the County of Dumfries.'

—a toast that the most outrageous frenzy of loyalty cannot object to. I request and beg that this morning you will wait on the parties present at the foolish dispute. I shall only add that I am truly sorry that a man who stood so high in my estimation as Mr Dods should use me in the manner in which I conceive he has done.

R. B.

TO MR SAMUEL CLARK, JUNIOR, DUMFRIES.

DEAR SIR—I recollect something of a drunken promise yesternight to breakfast with you this morning. I am very sorry that it is impossible. I remember too, you very obligingly mentioning something of your intimacy with Mr Corbet, our Supervisor-General. Some of our folks about the Excise Office, Edinburgh, had, and perhaps still have, conceived a prejudice against me as being a drunken dissipated character. I might be all this, you know, and yet be an honest fellow; but you know that I am an honest fellow, and am nothing of this. You may in your own way let him know that I am not unworthy of subscribing myself, my dear Clark, your friend,

R. BURNS.

Walter Riddel had now returned from the West Indies, and at such a time it was natural that he should have his friends about him, and Burns amongst the number. Unfortunately, his hospitality was only too profuse, and his dinner-parties often ended in drunken orgies. A few months after this time, the host was brought to the brink of a duel on account of some offensive expressions used by an Englishman of the name of Baker, who, having left Dumfries next day, was astonished some time after to receive a hostile visit from Mr Riddel, he having not the slightest recollection of anything which had taken place.* One of these Woodley Park dinners was the cause of one of the most painful episodes in the poet's life—a breach in his friendship with the Riddels, which he widened by writing lampoons upon them. It is not known what exactly happened on the occasion. The men sat too long over their wine. Some madcap with the flowers in his hair seems to have suggested a wild rush to the drawing-room and a romp with the ladies. The story goes that every man seized a lady and kissed her, and that the hostess fell to Burns. There is no room for the suggestion that the frolic went further; the presence of the host himself renders

* *Dumfries Journal*, August 1794.

such a suggestion preposterous. The incident is paralleled in contemporary memoirs such as those of Gilbert Elliot, first Earl of Minto. However, Mrs Riddel resented Burns's conduct as an insult. He repented it bitterly, and sought forgiveness in a letter

TO MRS RIDDEL.

MADAM—I daresay that this is the first epistle you ever received from the nether world. I write you from the regions of Hell, amid the horrors of the damned. The time and manner of my leaving your earth I do not exactly know; as I took my departure in the heat of a fever of intoxication, contracted at your too hospitable mansion; but on my arrival here, I was fairly tried, and sentenced to endure the purgatorial tortures of this infernal confine, for the space of ninety-nine years, eleven months, and twenty-nine days; and all on account of the impropriety of my conduct yesternight under your roof. Here am I, laid on a bed of pitiless furze, with my aching head reclined on a pillow of ever-piercing thorn, while an infernal tormentor, wrinkled, and old, and cruel, his name I think is *Recollection*, with a whip of scorpions, forbids peace or rest to approach me, and keeps anguish eternally awake. Still, Madam, if I could in any measure be reinstated in the good opinion of the fair circle whom my conduct last night so much injured, I think it would be an alleviation to my torments. For this reason I trouble you with this letter. To the men of the company I will make no apology.—Your husband, who insisted on my drinking more than I chose, has no right to blame me; and the other gentlemen were partakers of my guilt. But to you, Madam, I have much to apologise. Your good opinion I valued as one of the greatest acquisitions I had made on earth, and I was truly a beast to forfeit it. There was a Miss I—— too, a woman of fine sense, gentle and unassuming manners—do make on my part, a miserable, d—d wretch's best apology to her. A Mrs G——, a charming woman, did me the honor to be prejudiced in my favour; this makes me hope that I have not outraged her beyond all forgiveness. To all the other ladies please present my humblest contrition for my conduct, and my petition for their gracious pardon. O all ye powers of decency and decorum! whisper to them that my errors, though great, were involuntary—that an intoxicated man is the vilest of beasts—that it was not in my nature to be brutal to any one—that to be rude to a woman, when in my senses, was impossible with me—but——

* * * * *

Regret! Remorse! Shame! ye three hell-hounds that ever dog my steps and bay at my heels, spare me! spare me!

Forgive the offences, and pity the perdition of, Madam, your humble slave,

ROBT. BURNS.

He seems at the same time to have made an appeal to Mr Riddel :

The friend whom, wil'd from wisdom's way,
The fumes of wine infuriate send
(Not moony madness more astray)—
Who but deplores that hapless friend ?

Mine was th' insensate frenzied part,
Ah ! why should I such scenes outlive ?
Scenes so abhorrent to my heart !—
'Tis thine to pity and forgive.

Such apologies ought to have made his peace with Mr and Mrs Riddel, especially considering his host's own culpability. But, from whatever considerations, known or unknown, they were unforgiving, though the breach did not seem quite hopeless at first.

TO MRS RIDDEL.

MADAM—I return your common-place book. I have perused it with much pleasure, and would have continued my criticisms, but as it seems the critic has forfeited your esteem, his strictures must lose their value.

If it is true that 'offences come only from the heart,' before you I am guiltless. To admire, esteem, and prize you, as the most accomplished of women, and the first of friends—if these are crimes, I am the most offending thing alive.

In a face where I used to meet the kind complacency of friendly confidence, *now* to find cold neglect, and contemptuous scorn—is a wrench that my heart can ill bear. It is however some kind of miserable good luck ; that while *de-haut-en-bas* rigour may depress an unoffending wretch to the ground, it has a tendency to rouse a stubborn something in his bosom, which, though it cannot heal the wounds of his soul, is at least an opiate to blunt their poignancy.

With the profoundest respect for your abilities ; the most sincere esteem, and ardent regard, for your gentle heart and amiable manners ; and the most fervent wish and prayer for your welfare, peace, and bliss, I have the honor to be, Madam, your most devoted humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS..

TO THE SAME.

I have this moment got the Song from Syme, and I am sorry to see that he has spoilt it a good deal. It shall be a lesson to me how I lend him any thing again.

I have sent you *Werter*, truly happy to have any the smallest opportunity of obliging you.

'Tis true Madam, I saw you once since I was at W[oodley] P[ark]; and that once froze the very life-blood of my heart. Your reception of me was such, that a wretch meeting the eye of his judge, about to pronounce sentence of death on him, could only have envied my feelings and situation. But I hate the theme, and never more shall write or speak on it.

One thing I shall proudly say, that I can pay Mrs R. a higher tribute of esteem, and appreciate her amiable worth more truly, than any man whom I have seen approach her; nor *will* I yield the *pas* to any man living, in subscribing myself with the sincerest truth, her devoted humble servant,

R. B.

As time passed the breach was probably made wider by the gossip of injudicious friends. Certain it is that Burns became deeply incensed against his old friends, and expressed his anger in a poem which he subsequently desired to recall. It was in the following style that he lampooned the once admired Maria:

MONODY

ON A LADY FAMED FOR HER CAPRICE.

How cold is that bosom which Folly once fired!

How pale is that cheek where the rouge lately glisten'd!

How silent that tongue which the echoes oft tired!

How dull is that ear which to flatt'ry so listen'd!

If sorrow and anguish their exit await,

From friendship and dearest affection remov'd;

How doubly severer, Maria, thy fate!

Thou diedst unwept, as thou livedst unlov'd.

Loves, Graces and Virtues, I call not on you:

So shy, grave and distant, ye shed not a tear.

But come, all ye offspring of Folly so true,

And flowers let us cull for Maria's cold bier.

We'll search through the garden for each silly flower,

We'll roam through the forest for each idle weed,

But chiefly the nettle, so typical, shower,

For none e'er approached her but rued the rash deed.

We'll sculpture the marble, we'll measure the lay :
 Here Vanity strums on her idiot lyre !
 There keen Indignation shall dart on his prey,
 Which spurning Contempt shall redeem from his ire !

THE EPITAPH.

Here lies now, a prey to insulting neglect,
 Who once was a butterfly gay in life's beam :
 Want only of Wisdom denied her respect,
 Want only of Goodness denied her esteem.

James Williamson, the leader of the dramatic company which occasionally played for a season in the little theatre behind the George Inn in Dumfries, had, like Burns, been admitted into the Woodley Park circle. About this time the poet happened to hear of a most extraordinary adventure which Williamson and his associates had, while performing at Whitehaven. The 'bad Earl of Lonsdale' (1736-1802), whom Burns hated heartily, had committed the whole company to prison there as vagrants.* The poet, then, saw in the association of the player with two objects of his aversion an opportunity of striking both with one blow. He conceived the idea of the following epistle, as written by Williamson in his Whitehaven prison to the lady whose society he had lately enjoyed :

EPISTLE FROM ESOPUS† TO MARIA.

From those drear solitudes and frowsy cells,
 Where Infamy with sad Repentance dwells ; ‡
 Where turnkeys make the jealous portal fast,
 And deal from iron hands the spare repast ;
 Where truant 'prentices, yet young in sin,
 Blush at the curious stranger peeping in ;
 Where strumpets, relics of the drunken roar,
 Resolve to drink, nay, half—to whore—no more ;

* See a communication in the *Kendal Mercury*, July 10, 1852.

† Æsopus was the most celebrated tragic actor in Rome in the Ciceronian period, the only peer of Roscius the comedian. He was a familiar friend of Cicero's.

‡ 'In these dread solitudes and awful cells,
 Where heavenly pensive contemplation dwells,' &c.

Epistle of Eloisa to Abelard.

Where tiny thieves, not destin'd yet to swing,
 Beat hemp for others riper for the string :
 From these dire scenes my wretched lines I date,
 To tell Maria her Esopus' fate.

'Alas ! I feel I am no actor here !'*
 'Tis real hangmen real scourges bear !
 Prepare, Maria, for a horrid tale
 Will turn thy very rouge to deadly pale ;
 Will make thy hair, though erst from gipsy poll'd,
 By barber woven and by barber sold,
 Though twisted smooth with Harry's nicest care,
 Like hoary bristles to erect and stare !
 The hero of the mimic scene, no more
 I start in Hamlet, in Othello roar ;
 Or, haughty Chieftain, 'mid the din of arms,
 In Highland bonnet woo Malvina's charms :
 While sans-culottes stoop up the mountain high,
 And steal from me Maria's prying eye.
 Blest Highland bonnet ! once my proudest dress,
 Now, prouder still, Maria's temples press !
 I see her wave thy towering plumes afar,
 And call each coxcomb to the wordy war !
 I see her face the first of Ireland's sons,†
 And even out-Irish his Hibernian bronze !
 The crafty Colonel ‡ leaves the tartan'd lines
 For other wars, where he a hero shines ;
 The hopeful youth, in Scottish senate bred,
 Who owns a Bushby's heart without the head, §
 Comes 'mid a string of coxcombs to display
 That *Veni, vidi, vici*, is his way ;
 The shrinking Bard adown the alley skulks
 And dreads a meeting worse than Woolwich hulks,

* Lyttelton's Prologue to Thomson's *Coriolanus*, spoken by Mr Quin.

† The poet here enumerates several of Mrs Riddel's visiting-friends. 'Gillespie' has been noted as the name of the Irish gentleman first alluded to.

‡ Colonel M'Douall, of Logan, a noted Lothario, the story of whose connection with Miss Peggy Kennedy has already been told. He figures also as 'Sculdudd'ry Logan's M'Douall' in the Second Heron Election Ballad.

§ Maitland Bushby, son of John Bushby, the 'honest man.'

Though there his heresies in Church and State
 Might well award him Muir and Palmer's fate : *
 Still she, undaunted, reels and rattles on
 And dares the public like a noontide sun.
What scandal called Maria's jaunty stagger,
 The ricket reeling of a crooked swagger ?
Whose spleen (e'en worse than Burns's venom, when
 He dips in gall unmix'd his eager pen
 And pours his vengeance in the burning line),
Who christen'd thus Maria's lyre-divine,
 The idiot strum of Vanity bemus'd,
 And even th' abuse of Poesy abus'd ?
Who called her verse a Parish Workhouse, made
 For motley foundling Fancies, stolen or strayed ?

A Workhouse ! Ah, that sound awakes my woes,
 And pillows on the thorn my rack'd repose !
 In durance vile here must I wake and weep,
 And all my frowsy couch in sorrow steep :
 That straw where many a rogue has lain of yore,
 And vermin'd gipsies litter'd heretofore.

Why, Lonsdale, thus thy wrath on vagrants pour
 Must earth no rascal save thyself endure ?
 Must thou alone in guilt immortal swell
 And make a vast monopoly of Hell ?
 Thou know'st the Virtues cannot hate thee worse :
 The Vices also, must they club their curse ?
 Or must no tiny sin to others fall,
 Because thy guilt's supreme enough for all ?

Maria, send me, too, thy griefs and cares,
 In all of thee sure thy Esopus shares :
 As thou at all mankind the flag unfurls,
 Who on my fair one Satire's vengeance hurls !
 Who calls thee pert, affected, vain coquette,
 A wit in folly and a fool in wit !

* See *ante*, p. 34.

Who says that 'fool' alone is not thy due,
And quotes thy treacheries to prove it true !

Our force united on thy foes we'll turn,
And dare the war with all of woman born :
For who can write and speak as thou and I ?
My periods that deciphering defy,
And thy still matchless tongue that conquers all reply !

Burns alludes in this poem to a family which in his day occupied a conspicuous place in Dumfriesshire society. John Bushby, a man of some ability, had made a competence in Dumfries by combining the businesses of solicitor, banker, and estate factor. Without retiring from business, he had settled down as a country gentleman at Tinwald Downs, where he saw a great deal of company, and often had the poet as his guest.

In time, however, the two men became estranged. The story goes that 'at dinner one day at Tinwald Downs, the pudding had been brought to table very hot. Mr Bushby, who had tasted and smarted from it—remembering perhaps the boy's trick in similar circumstances, which is the subject of a well-known story—bade his wife tell the cook not to allow the pudding to become so *cold* in future before being sent upstairs. The poet, engaged in conversation, and not attending particularly to what was going on, fell into the snare, and took a large piece of the pudding into his mouth. His agony, as he desperately endeavoured to swallow the scalding morsel, amused Mr Bushby exceedingly ; but the sufferer was far from relishing the joke.' It is certain that for some reason Burns took a dislike to Mr Bushby, and the feeling, evidences of which will be seen later, was probably aggravated by other circumstances. The person, however, more particularly alluded to in Esopus's lines, was Maitland Bushby, son of John Bushby, then a young advocate, and commonly understood to be by no means his father's equal in point of intellect.

The severity of Burns's pasquinades on Mrs Riddel is partly accounted for, if not excused, by the state of his feelings during this winter. His misery is expressed in a letter, which shows, however, that he had better resources than satire for the soothing of his vexed spirit :

TO ALEXANDER CUNNINGHAM, ESQ.

DUMFRIES, 25th February 1794.

Canst thou minister to a mind diseased? Canst thou speak peace and rest to a soul, tost on a sea of troubles, without one friendly star to guide her course and dreading that the next surge may overwhelm her? Canst thou give to a frame, tremblingly alive as the tortures of suspense, the stability and hardihood of the rock that braves the blast? If thou canst not do the least of these, why wouldst thou disturb me in my miseries, with thy inquiries after me?

* * * * *

For these two months I have not been able to lift a pen. My constitution and frame were, *ab origine*, blasted with a deep incurable taint of hypochondria, which poisons my existence. Of late a number of domestic vexations, and some pecuniary share in the ruin of these d—d times; losses which, though trifling, were yet what I could ill bear, have so irritated me that my feelings at times could only be envied by a reprobate spirit listening to the sentence that dooms it to perdition.

Are you deep in the language of consolation? I have exhausted in reflection every topic of comfort. *A heart at ease* would have been charmed with my sentiments and reasonings; but as to myself, I was like Judas Iscariot preaching the gospel: he might melt and mould the hearts of those around him, but his own kept its native incorrigibility.

Still, there are two great pillars that bear us up, amid the wreck of misfortune and misery. The ONE is composed of the different modifications of a certain noble, stubborn something in man, known by the names of courage, fortitude, magnanimity. The OTHER is made up of those feelings and sentiments which, however the sceptic may deny them or the enthusiast disfigure them, are yet, I am convinced, original and component parts of the human soul; those *senses of the mind*, if I may be allowed the expression, which connect us with, and link us to, those awful obscure realities—an all-powerful and equally beneficent God; and a world to come, beyond death and the grave. The first gives the nerve of combat, while a ray of hope beams on the field; the last pours the balm of comfort into the wounds which time can never cure.

I do not remember, my dear Cunningham, that you and I ever talked on the subject of religion at all. I know some who laugh at it, as the trick of the crafty FEW to lead the undiscerning MANY; or at most as an uncertain obscurity, which mankind can never know anything of and with which they are fools if they give themselves much to do. Nor would I quarrel with a man for his irreligion any more than I would for his want of a musical ear. I would regret that he was shut out from what to me and to others were such superlative sources of enjoyment. It is in this point of view, and for this reason, that I will deeply imbue

the mind of every child of mine with religion. If my son should happen to be a man of feeling, sentiment and taste, I shall thus add largely to his enjoyments. Let me flatter myself that this sweet little fellow who is just now running about my desk will be a man of a melting, ardent, glowing heart, and an imagination delighted with the painter and rapt with the poet. Let me figure him, wandering out in a sweet evening, to inhale the balmy gales and enjoy the growing luxuriance of the spring, himself the while in the blooming youth of life. He looks abroad on all nature, and thro' nature up to nature's God. His soul, by swift, delighting degrees, is wrapt above this sublunary sphere until he can be silent no longer and bursts out into the glorious enthusiasm of Thomson.

These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God. The rolling year
Is full of thee.*

And so on in all the spirit and ardour of that charming hymn.

These are no ideal pleasures: they are real delights; and I ask what of the delights among the sons of men are superior, not to say, equal, to them? And they have this precious, vast addition, that conscious virtue stamps them for her own; and lays hold on them to bring herself into the presence of a witnessing, judging and approving God.

R. B.

'They,' says Lockhart, 'who have been told that Burns was ever a degraded being—who have permitted themselves to believe that his only consolations were those of "the opiate guilt applies to grief," will do well to pause over this noble letter, and judge for themselves.'

TO ALEXANDER CUNNINGHAM, ESQ.

DUMFRIES, 3d March 1794.

Since I wrote you the last lugubrious sheet, I have not had time to write you further. When I say that I had not time, that, as usual, means that the three demons, Indolence, Business and Ennui have so completely shared my hours among them as not to leave me a five minutes' fragment to take up a pen in.

Thank heaven, I feel my spirits buoying upwards with the renovating year. Now I shall in good earnest take up Thomson's songs. I daresay he thinks I have used him unkindly, and I must own with too much appearance of truth; though, if offences come only from the heart, I

* From *A Hymn*, which forms a sort of *envoi* to *The Seasons*.

assure him that I am innocent. Apropos, do you know the much admired old highland air called 'The Sutor's Dochter?' It is a first-rate favorite of mine and I have written what I reckon one of my best songs to it. I will send it you, set as I think it should be and as it was sung with great applause in many fashionable groups by Major Robertson, of Lude, who was here with his corps. By the way, if you do not know him, let me beg of you, as you would relish a high acquisition to your social happiness, to get acquainted with him. He always, every time I had the very great pleasure of being in his company, reminded me of a forcible saying of Charlie Caldwell, a drunken carrier in Ayr:—Charles had a *cara sposa* after his own heart, who used to take camp out with him, till neither could see the other; then those honest genii of old Scottish social life ('reaming swats' used to transport the tender pair beyond the bounds of sober joy, to the reign of rapture!)—the ardent lover would grapple the yielding fair to his bosom:—"Marget, ye're a glory to God and the delight o' my soul!"

As I cannot in conscience tax you with the postage of a packet, I must keep this bizzare melange of an epistle until I find the chance of a private conveyance. Here follows the song I have mentioned:—

SONG.

TUNE—*The Sutor's Dochter.*

Wilt thou be my Dearie? &c.—(See p. 96).

There is one commission that I must trouble you with. I lately lost a valuable seal, a present from a departed friend, which vexes me much. I have gotten one of your Highland pebbles, which I fancy would make a very decent one; and I want to cut my armorial bearings on it: will you be so obliging as to enquire what will be the expense of such a business? I do not know that my name is matriculated, as the heralds call it, at all; but I have invented arms for myself, so, you know, I will be chief of the name; and, by courtesy of Scotland, will likewise be entitled to supporters. These, however, I do not intend having on my seal. I am a bit of a herald and shall give you, *secundum artem*, my arms. On a field, azure, a holly-bush, seeded, proper, in base; a shepherd's pipe and crook, saltier-wise, also proper, in chief. On a wreath of the colours, a wood-lark perching on a sprig of bay-tree, proper, for crest. Two mottoes: round the top of the crest, 'Wood-Notes Wild;'^{*} at the bottom of the shield, in the usual place, 'Better a wee bush than nae bield.'^{*} By the shepherd's pipe and crook I do not mean the nonsense of painters of Arcadia, but a *Stock* and *Horn*, and a *Club*, such as you see at the head of Allan Ramsay, in Allan's quarto edition of the 'Gentle Shepherd.' By the bye, do you know Allan? [*i.e.* David Allan, the painter]. He must be a man of very great genius. Why is he not

^{*} Better a small bush than no shelter at all.

more known? Has he no patrons? or, do 'Poverty's cold wind and crushing rain beat keen and heavy' on him? I once, and but once, got a glance of that noble edition of the noblest pastoral in the world; and dear as it was, I mean dear as to my pocket, I would have bought it; but was told it was printed and engraved for subscribers only. He is the only artist who has hit genuine pastoral costume. What, my dear Cunningham, is there in riches, that they narrow and encallous the heart so? I think that were I as rich as the sun, I would be as generous as day; but as I have no reason to imagine my soul a nobler one than any other man's, I must conclude that wealth imparts a bird-line quality to the possessor, at which the man in native poverty would have revolted. What has led me to this is the idea of so much merit as Mr Allan possesses, and such riches as a nabob, or governor contractor, possesses, and why do not they form a mutual league? Let Wealth shelter and cherish unprotected Merit, and the gratitude and celebrity of that merit will richly repay the outlay.

March 22.

In fact, I am writing you a journal, and not a letter. A bustle of business has laid my epistolary pen aside in silence, since I took it up last to you.

I have just received a letter from Thomson which has filled me with self-reproaches. I will directly, and in good earnest, set about his work. I am sorry I did not know him when I was in Edinburgh; but I will tell you a plot which I have been contriving: you and he shall in the course of this summer meet me Half-way; that is, at the 'Bield Inn;' and there we will pour out a Drink Offering before the Lord and enter into a solemn League and Covenant, never to be broken or forgotten.

Wha first shall rise to gang awa,
A cuckold, coward loon is he;
Wha first beside his chair shall fa',
He is the King amang us THREE.

ROBT. BURNS.

TO MR JAMES JOHNSON.

DUMFRIES, [February] 1794.

MY DEAR SIR—I send you, by my friend Mr Wallace,* forty-one songs for your fifth Volume. Mr Clarke has also a good many, if he have not, with his usual indolence, *cast them at the cocks*. I have still a good parcel amongst my hands in scraps and fragments; so that I hope we will make shift with our last volume.

* Mr Wallace was a young 'writer' in Dumfries. He deserves honourable mention in the Life of Burns on account of the kind zeal he displayed, two or three years after this date, in behalf of the bereaved family of the poet.

You should have heard from me long ago ; but over and above some vexatious share in the pecuniary losses of these accursed times, I have, all this winter, been plagued with low spirits and blue devils ; so that I have almost hung my harp upon the willow trees.

I have got an old Highland durk for which I have great veneration, as it once was the durk of Lord Balmerino.* It fell into bad hands who stripped it of the silver mounting, as well as the knife and fork. I have some thoughts of sending it to your care to get it mounted anew. Our friend Clarke owes me an account, somewhere about a pound, which would go a good way in paying the expense. I remember you once settled an account in this way before ; and as you still have money matters to settle with him, you might accommodate us both. I do not, my dear Sir, wish you to do this ; and I beg you will not hint it to Mr Clarke ; if we do it at all, I will break it to him myself. My best compliments to your worthy old father and your better half.—Yours,

ROBT. BURNS.

TO MR JAMES JOHNSON.

MY DEAR FRIEND—I thank you for your kind present of poor Riddell's Book.† Depend upon it that your fifth volume shall not be forgotten. In the meantime, I have gotten you two new subscribers, Patrick Heron, Esquire of Kerrochtree, and Major Heron of Kerrochtree. Please put up two sets of your four volumes and direct them as above, and leave them at Mr Heron's, George Square. Please do it on receipt of this, as there will be a carrier from Kerrochtree in Edinburgh this week.

I have just been getting three or four songs for your book. Pray, will you let me know how many, and what are the, songs Urbani has borrowed from your *Museum*? Yours,

R. B.

[DUMFRIES,] June 29th, 1794.

JAMES JOHNSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND—Your additional favours with the Durk I received, and am ashamed I did not write to you sooner concerning what you requested anent the Songs Mr Urbani had taken, but I deferred till I could inform you that the fifth Volume was actually begun, which is now the case. Mr Clarke has given me some to begin with and he is busie with more ; he has promised to hold me agoing. Please accept my warmest thanks for all your kind favours and wishes. I

* The sixth and last Lord Balmerino (1688-1746) was beheaded on Tower Hill for his share in the '45.

† *Collection of Scots, Galwegian and Border Tunes*, by the late Robert Riddell of Glenriddell.

could have it in my power, but to serve you, this fresh suply has added new life to me as I am trembling for fear lest we should not make up the Number. I should have been gled to have heard from you along with the parcel; but suspect you have been angry with me as I did not answer your last favour. I shall take care to the venorable Relick of Balmerino as soon as possibell—there has been lately published 2 volumes of Scots Songs in London. I think we might cull a few songs from them. There is some songs in it without tunes which my father and your Humble Servant at least can have. Mr Clarke will take them off. They have been very free in their prafice: they deserve to be prosecuted—there is a Mr Watland a Music Seller in Edinr. thinks no more sin to take out of the *Museum* and print them single songs then a beggar would in taking a halfpeny. However, my friend, I do not mention this that your productions are, or may be bound, but I mention this of Pirates taking without your or our advice and lafing and saying they will take any of them they please and saying I may be thankfull they do not print them all as they have as good a right as me. However I leave this but it would be well done to give a check at home so as to keep those at a distance in some sort of awe.

My Dear Friend, I must still beg you to add another favour. However, I do not know if your delicacy will permit you, but if you would do it, it would be a particular kindness doing me. You know your and my worthy friend Mr Robt. Riddel had a book of Music engraved by me, of which he made a sollemn promise before these Witnesses, Mr Stephen Clarke and Mr Smellie the printer, that if the Book did not pay itself within a limited time he (Mr Riddel) would pay the Ballance. I did write Mrs Riddel to the same purpose severall months ago. I did not choose to press her by a second letter lest it should rise a pang for the Deceased but would beg of you to mention it in as tender a manner as possibell (you know the properest method) to take her. I shall be as easy as possibell and will compromise the matter in as easy a way as I can: the whole Sum for Engraving, printing, &c., is £18, 10. 3., and I am persuaded I have not sold 10 copies; it was against my will to have medled with that publication as I was serten it would not sell and of which Mr Ciarke is witness. If Mrs Riddel would make any kind of offer so as to get this business settled, and if she chuse she may have some copies of the book to give to her acquaintance.

Below is the list of songs Mr Urbani took out of the *Museum*, which he solicited and I made him welcome. I need not mention the others, as they are to be had almost in every book of Scots Songs. My father and Wife, who is now moving about, desire to be remembered in the kindest manner to you and Mrs Burns. And I rest, Dear Friend, your much obliged and Humble Servant,

JAMES JOHNSON.

[The list includes 'Lord Gregory,' 'I'll lay me down and die,' music by a young lady; &c.]

The authentic Burns songs (wholly written by him or nearly so) in Johnson's fifth volume were as follow :

THE LOVELY LASS OF INVERNESS.

TUNE—*The lovely Lass of Inverness.*

The lovely lass o' Inverness,
 Nae joy nor pleasure can she see ;
 For e'en and morn she cries, ' Alas !'
 And ay the saut tear blins her e'e ; salt—blinds
 ' Drumossie Moor *—Drumossie day—
 A waefu' day it was to me ! woeful
 For there I lost my father dear—
 My father dear and brethren three.

' Their winding-sheet the bluidy clay,
 Their graves are growing green to see ;
 And by them lies the dearest lad
 That ever blest a woman's e'e !
 Now wae to thee, thou cruel lord,†
 A bluidy man I trow thou be ;
 For mony a heart thou has made sair sore
 That ne'er did wrang to thine or thee !

[The first half-stanza of this song is from an old composition.]

A RED, RED ROSE.

TUNE—*Graham's Strathspey.*

O my Luve 's like a red, red rose
 That 's newly sprung in June ;
 O my Luve 's like the melodie
 That 's sweetly play'd in tune.
 As fair art thou, my bonie lass,
 So deep in luve am I ;
 And I will luve thee still, my dear,
 Till a' the seas gang dry.

* The battle of Culloden was fought, 16th April 1746, on Drummossie Muir.

† The Duke of Cumberland.



C. Martin Hardie. R.S.A.

F. Jenkins. Heliog. Paris.

O my love's like a red red rose

Till a' the seas gang dry, my Dear,
 And the rocks melt wi' the sun ;
 O I will love thee still, my dear,
 While the sands o' life shall run.
 And fare thee weel, my only Luve !
 And fare thee weel a while !
 And I will come again, my Luve,
 Tho' it were ten thousand mile !

[This song was written by Burns as an improvement upon a street ditty, which Peter Buchan says was composed by a Lieutenant Hinchies, as a farewell to his sweetheart, when on the eve of parting. Various versions of the original song are given in Hogg and Motherwell's edition of Burns, including one from a stall sheet containing 'six excellent new songs,' which Motherwell conjectures to have been printed about 1770, and of which his copy bore these words on its title, in a childish scrawl believed to be that of the Ayrshire bard, 'Robine Burns aught this buik and no other.' A somewhat better version than any of these was published by the late Robert Hogg in 1823 :

O fare-thee-well, my own true love,
 O fare-thee-well a while ;
 But I'll come back and see thee, love,
 Though I go ten thousand mile.

Ten thousand mile is a long, long way,
 When from me you are gone :
 You leave me here to lament and sigh,
 But you never can hear my moan.

Though all our friends should never be pleased -
 They are grown so lofty and high—
 I never will break the vows I have made,
 Till the stars fall from the sky.

Till the stars fall from the sky, my love,
 And the rocks melt wi' the sun :
 I'll aye prove true to thee, my love,
 Till all these things are done.

Do you not see yon turtle-dove
 That sits on yonder tree ?
 It is making its moan for the loss of its love,
 As I shall do for thee.

Now fare-thee-well, my dearest love,
 Till I return on shore ;
 And thou shalt be my only love,
 Though it were for evermore.

THE MINSTREL AT LINCLUDEN

TUNE—*Cummock Psalms.*

As I stood by yon roofless tower,
 Where the wa'-flower scents the dewy air,
 Where the houlet mourns in her ivy bower owl
 And tells the midnight moon her care.

Chorus—A lassie all alone was making her moan,
 Lamenting our lads beyond the sea ;
 In the bluidy wars they fa', and our honor's gane and a',
 And broken-hearted we maun die. must

The winds were laid, the air was still,
 The stars they shot alang the sky ;
 The tod was howling on the hill
 And the distant-echoing glens reply.

The burn adown its hazelly path
 Was rushing by the ruin'd wa',
 Hasting to join the sweeping Nith
 Whase roarings seem'd to rise and fa'.

The cauld blae north was streaming forth leaden-hued
 Her lights, wi' hissing, eerie din,
 Athort the lift they start and shift Athwart
 Like Fortune's favors, tint as win'. lost

Now, looking over firth and fauld, sheep-fold
 Her horn the pale-fac'd Cynthia rear'd,
 When lo ! in form of Minstrel auld
 A stern and stalwart ghaist appear'd. ghost

And frae his harp sic strains did flow from—such
 Might rous'd the slumbering Dead to hear ;
 But oh, it was a tale of woe
 As ever met a Briton's ear !

He sang wi' joy his former day ;
 He, weeping, wail'd his latter times ;
 But what he said it was nae play—
 I winna ventur 't in my rhymes.

OUT OVER THE FORTH.*

TUNE—*Charlie Gordon's welcome Home.*

Out over the Forth I look to the North :
 But what is the North and its Highlands to me ?
 The South nor the East gie ease to my breast,
 The far foreign land or the wild rolling sea.

But I look to the West when I gae to rest,
 That happy my dreams and my slumbers may be :
 For far in the West lives he I lo'e best,
 The lad that is dear to my babie and me.

LOUIS, WHAT RECK I BY THEE?†

TUNE—*Louis, what Reck I by Thee?*

Louis,‡ what reck I by thee ?
 Or Geordie § on his ocean ?
 Dyvor, beggar louns to me,
 I reign in Jeanie's bosom !

Bankrupt—
 worthless fellows

Let her crown my love her law,
 And in her breast enthrone me :
 Kings and nations, swith awa !
 Reif randies, I disown ye !

quick—begone
 Thief-beggars

* Writing to Alexander Cunningham on 11th March 1791, Burns transcribed the second stanza of this song, describing it as 'a ballad I have just now on the tapis.'

† It has been conjectured, from the allusion to 'Jeanie' in this song, that it was composed by Burns on the arrival of his wife at Ellisland in 1788. This is, however, merely conjecture.

‡ The king of France.

§ The king of Great Britain.

CHARLIE, HE'S MY DARLING.

'Twas on a Monday morning
 Right early in the year
 That Charlie came to our town,
 The young Chevalier.

Chorus—An' Charlie, he's my darling,
 My darling, my darling,
 Charlie, he's my darling,
 The young Chevalier.

As he was walking up the street
 The city for to view,
 O there he spied a bonie lass
 The window looking thro'.

Sae light's he jimped up the stair
 And tirl'd at the pin ;*
 And wha sae ready as hersel
 To let the laddie in !

He set his Jenny on his knee,
 All in his Highland dress ;
 For brawlie well he ken'd the way
 To please a bonie lass.

full well

It's up yon heathery mountain,
 And down yon scroggy glen, abounding in brushwood
 We daur na gang a-milking,
 For Charlie and his men.

go

THE COOPER O' CUDDY.

TUNE—*Bab at the Boustier.*

The Cooper o' Cuddy cam here awa,
 He ca'd the girrs out o'er us a' ;
 And our gudewife has gotten a ca'
 That anger'd the silly gudeman, O.

hoops

* On the back of a house-door there used to be attached a rising pin—i.e. a notched rod of iron, with a loose string attached. This made a loud noise on being drawn up and down (*tirl'd*).



C. Martin Hardie, R.S.A.

*My heart is sair - I dare na tell -
My heart is sair for somebody.*

F. Jenkins, Hellog, Paris

Chorus—We'll hide the cooper behind the door,
 Behind the door, behind the door,
 We'll hide the cooper behind the door,
 An' cover him under a mawn, O. basket
without lid

He sought them out, he sought them in,
 Wi' deil hae her! and deil hae him!
 But the body he was sae doited an' blin' stupid
 He wist na whare he was gaun, O. knew not—going

They cooper'd at e'en, they cooper'd at morn,
 Till our gudeman has gotten the scorn;
 On ilka brow she's planted a horn
 And swears that there they shall stan', O.

S O M E B O D Y !

TUNE—*For the Sake of Somebody.*

My heart is sair, I dare na tell, sore
 My heart is sair for Somebody;
 I could wake a winter-night
 For the sake o' Somebody.
 Oh-hon! for Somebody!
 Oh-hey! for Somebody!
 I could range the world around
 For the sake o' Somebody!

Ye Powers that smile on virtuous love,
 O, sweetly smile on Somebody!
 Frae ilka danger keep him free From every
 And send me safe my Somebody!
 Oh-hon! for Somebody!
 Oh-hey! for Somebody!
 I wad do—what wad I not?— would
 For the sake o' Somebody!

[‘The whole of this song was written by Burns, except the third and fourth lines of stanza first, which are taken from Ramsay’s song under the same title and to the same old tune.’—STENHOUSE.]

WILT THOU BE MY DEARIE?

AIR—*The Sutor's Tochter.*

Wilt thou be my Dearie?
 When sorrow wrings thy gentle heart
 O wilt thou let me chear thee?
 By the treasure of my soul,
 That's the love I bear thee!
 I swear and vow that only thou
 Shall ever be my Dearie;
 Only thou, I swear and vow,
 Shall ever be my Dearie!

Lassie, say thou lo'es me!
 Or, if thou wilt na be my ain,
 Say na thou 'lt refuse me!
 If it winna, canna be
 Thou for thine may chuse me,
 Let me, Lassie, quickly die,
 Trusting that thou lo'es me;
 Lassie, let me quickly die,
 Trusting that thou lo'es me!

lovest

LOVELY POLLY STEWART.

TUNE—*You're welcome, Charlie Stewart.*

O lovely Polly Stewart!
 O charming Polly Stewart!
 There's ne'er a flower that blooms in May
 That's half so fair as thou art!
 The flower it blows, it fades, it fa's,
 And art can ne'er renew it;
 But worth and truth eternal youth
 Will gie to Polly Stewart!

blows—falls

May he whase arms shall fauld thy charms
 Possess a leal and true heart!
 To him be given to ken the Heaven
 He grasps in Polly Stewart!

fold

loyal

know

O lovely Polly Stewart !
 O charming Polly Stewart !
 There's ne'er a flower that blooms in May
 That's half so fair as thou art !

Mary Stewart, the subject of these verses, was a girl about seventeen or eighteen years of age when they were written, having been born in 1775. She was the daughter of William Stewart, resident factor on the Rev. James Stewart Menteith's Dumfriesshire estate of Closeburn. She married her cousin Ishmael Stewart of Springfield, by whom she had three sons. Ishmael Stewart had to leave the country under a cloud ; it has never been discovered what became of him. Polly next married George Welsh, farmer of Newtonmains and grand-uncle of Jane Welsh Carlyle. The result of this marriage was two daughters. It proved unhappy, and Polly went in 1806 to reside with her father, who had retired from Closeburn to live in Maxwelltown, Dumfries. There she became attached to a Swiss officer of the name of Fleitz, one of a number of French prisoners of war residing in Dumfries. She accompanied him to France, where he found employment among the mercenaries of Louis XVIII. On their dismissal Fleitz went with Polly to Switzerland, where he died. She then took refuge with a cousin in Florence. She ultimately died in a lunatic asylum in 1847 in the seventy-second year of her age, having survived all her children.

WAE IS MY HEART.

TUNE—*Wae is my Heart.*

Wae is my heart, and the tear's in my e'e ;	sorrowful
Lang, lang joy's been a stranger to me ;	long
Forsaken and friendless my burden I bear,	
And the sweet voice o' pity ne'er sounds in my ear.	

Love, thou hast pleasures, and deep hae I loved ;	have
Love thou hast sorrows, and sair hae I proved ;	sore
But this bruised heart that now bleeds in my breast,	
I can feel by its throbbings will soon be at rest.	

O if I were where happy I hae been ;
 Down by yon stream and yon bonie castle-green ;
 For there he is wand'ring, and musing on me,
 Wha wad soon dry the tear frae Phillis's e'e.* would—from

HERE'S TO THY HEALTH, MY BONIE LASS.†

TUNE—*Laggan Burn.*

Here's to thy health, my bonie lass,
 Gude-night and joy be wi' thee ;
 I'll come nae mair to thy bower-door
 To tell thee that I loe thee.
 O dinna think, my pretty pink,
 But I can live without thee :
 I vow and swear I dinna care
 How lang ye look about ye.

Thou'rt ay sae free informing me
 Thou hast nae mind to marry ;
 I'll be as free informing thee
 Nae time hae I to tarry.
 I ken thy friends try ilka means
 Frae wedlock to delay thee,
 Depending on some higher chance—
 But fortune may betray thee.

ka-w—every

I ken they scorn my low estate,
 But that does never grieve me ;
 For I'm as free as any he,
 Sma' siller will relieve me.

Little money

* Mr Scott Douglas has suggested that in this song Burns may have been 'mustering all the mysteries of his art with a view to cast his glamour over and render secure the affections of Maria Riddel, whom he had recently lampooned so severely.' The last two lines, apart from the allusion to Phillis, give an air of extreme improbability to this suggestion.

† Mrs Begg declared this song not to be Burns's, but to be one of those familiar ditties commonly sung at rural firesides before his efforts in that way were known. But internal evidence is all in favour of Burns's authorship.

I count my health my greatest wealth
 Sae lang as I'll enjoy it ;
 I'll fear nae scant, I'll bode nae want, anticipate
 As lang's I get employment.

But far-off fowls hae feathers fair,
 And ay until ye try them ;
 Tho' they seem fair, still have a care
 They may prove as bad as I am.
 But at twal at night, when the moon shines bright, twelve
 My dear, I'll come and see thee ;
 For the man that loves his mistress weel,
 Nae travel makes him weary.

Of the songs which appeared in Johnson's fifth volume, there are others which Burns had to some extent amended as they passed through his hands ; but as the songs themselves are of no great merit, and the improvements by Burns have only slightly modified their rough and often indelicate stanzas, they are postponed to a subordinate place in this work. After all, the fifth volume of Johnson did not exhaust the contributions of the poet, for in the sixth, published in 1803, there are a few pieces undoubtedly by him.

ANNA, THY CHARMS MY BOSOM FIRE.

TUNE—*Bonny Mary.*

Anna, thy charms my bosom fire
 And waste my soul with care ;
 But ah ! how bootless to admire
 When fated to despair !
 Yet in thy presence, lovely Fair,
 To hope may be forgiv'n :
 For sure 'twere impious to despair,
 So much in sight of Heaven.

[Composed on a sweetheart of Alexander Cunningham — she who afterwards jilted him. See letter to Cunningham, *4th May* 1789 (Vol. III., pp. 443-445).]

SCROGGAM.

There was a wife wonn'd in Cockpen,
Scroggam !
She brew'd gude ale for gentlemen,—
Sing auld Cowl, lay you down by me,
Scroggam, my dearie, ruffum !

The gudewife's dochter fell in a fever, landlady's daughter
 Scroggam !
The priest o' the parish fell in anither,—
Sing auld Cowl, lay you down by me,
Scroggam, my dearie, ruffum !

They laid the twa i' the bed thegither,
Scroggam !
That the heat o' the tane might cool the tither,— one
Sing auld Cowl, lay you down by me, -- other
Scroggam, my dearie, ruffum !

MY LADY'S GOWN THERE'S GAIRS UPON'T.*

My Lord a-hunting he is gane,
But hounds or hawks wi' him are nane ;
By Colin's cottage lies his game,
If Colin's Jenny be at hame.

Chorus—My Lady's gown there's gairt † upon't,
And gowden flowers sae rare upon't; golden
But Jenny's jimps and jirkinet stays—bodice
My Lord thinks meikle mair upon't. much more

* Stenhouse says 'Johnson long hesitated to admit the song into his work ; but, being blamed for such fastidiousness, he at length gave it a place there.'

† Gair, English *gore*, properly a piece inserted in a dress, evidently here meaning an ornamental part, a bright-coloured piece.

My Lady's white, my Lady's red,
And kith and kin o' Cassillis'* blude ;
But her tenpund lands o' tocher gude dowry
Were a' the charms his Lordship lo'ed.

Out o'er yon moor, out o'er yon moss,	over
Whare gor-cocks through the heather pass,	moor-cocks
There wons auld Colin's bonie lass—	lives
A lily in a wilderness.	

Sae sweetly move her genty limbs,
Like music-notes o' Lovers' hymns ;
The diamond-dew is her een sae blue,
Where laughing love sae wanton swims.

My Lady's dink, my Lady's drest, trim
The flower and fancy o' the west ;
But the Lassie that a man lo'es best,
O that's the Lass to mak him blest.

MEG O' THE MILL.†

TUNE—*Jackey Hume's Lament.*

O ken ye what Meg o' the mill has gotten?
An' ken ye what Meg o' the mill has gotten?
A braw new naig wi' the tail o' a ratton—
And that's what Meg o' the mill has gotten.

O ken ye what Meg o' the mill lo'es dearly?
An' ken ye what Meg o' the mill lo'es dearly?
A dram o' gude strunt in a morning early— strong drink
And that's what Meg o' the mill lo'es dearly.

O ken ye how Meg o' the mill was married ?
 An' ken ye how Meg o' the mill was married ?
 The Priest he was oxter'd, the Clerk he was carried—
 And that's how Meg o' the mill was married.

* The Kennedies, Earls of Cassillis, were the leading family in Carrick.

† The first version of the song sent to Thomson in April 1793.

O ken ye how Meg o' the mill was bedded?
 An' ken ye how Meg o' the mill was bedded?
 The groom gat sae fu' he fell awald beside it—
 And that's how Meg o' the mill was bedded.

drunk—doubled
up helpless

JOCKEY'S TA'EN THE PARTING KISS.

TUNE—*Jockey's ta'en the Parting Kiss.*

Jockey's ta'en the parting kiss,
 O'er the mountains he is gane;
 And with him is a' my bliss,
 Nought but griefs with me remain.
 Spare my love, ye winds that blaw,
 Plashy sleets and beating rain;
 Spare my love, thou feath'ry snaw
 Drifting o'er the frozen plain.

When the shades of evening creep
 O'er the day's fair, gladsome e'e,
 Sound and safely may he sleep,
 Sweetly blythe his waukening be
 He will think on her he loves,
 Fondly he'll repeat her name;
 For, whare'er he distant roves,
 Jockey's heart is still at hame.

awakening

O LAY THY LOOF IN MINE, LASS.*

TUNE—*The Cordwainers' March.*

A slave to love's unbounded sway,
 He aft has wrought me meikle wae;
 But now he is my deadly fae,
 Unless thou be my ain.

often—much woe

foe

* Both this song and its predecessor have been assigned by some editors to a later period in Burns's life—when he was lying on his death-bed. For this view no valid reason is assigned.

Chorus—O lay thy loof in mine, lass,
 In mine, lass, in mine, lass,
 And swear on thy white hand, lass,
 That thou wilt be my ain.

hand, palm
 own

There's monie a lass has broke my rest
 That for a blink I hae lo'ed best ;
 But thou art queen within my breast,
 For ever to remain.

many
 instant

CAULD IS THE E'ENIN' BLAST.

TUNE—*Peggy Ramsay*.*

Cauld is the e'enin' blast
 O' Boreas o'er the pool,
 And dawin it is dreary
 When birks are bare at Yule.

dawn
 birches

Cauld blows the e'enin' blast
 When bitter bites the frost,
 And, in the mirk and dreary drift,
 The hills and glens are lost.

dark

Ne'er sae murky blew the night
 That drifted o'er the hill,
 But bonie Peg-a-Ramsey
 Gat grist to her mill.

THERE'S NEWS, LASSES, NEWS.

'There's news, lasses, news,
 Gude news I've to tell !
 There's a boatfu' o' lads
 Come to our town, to sell.

* This is a version of a very old song, the title of which is quoted in *Twelfth Night*, Act III. Scene iii., by Sir Toby Belch.

Chorus—‘The wean wants a cradle,
 And the cradle wants a col ;
 An’ I’ll no gang to my bed
 Until I get a nod.’

child
pillow

‘Father,’ quo’ she, ‘Mither,’ quo’ she,
 ‘Do what you can,
 I’ll no gang to my bed
 Until I get a man.

‘I hae as gude a craft rig
 As made o’ yird and stane ;
 And waly fa’ the ley-crab,
 For I maun till ’t again.’

croft ridge
earth
ill befall—grass crop

O MALLY’S MEEK, MALLY’S SWEET.

As I was walking up the street,
 A barefit maid I chanc’d to meet ;
 But O the road was very hard
 For that fair maiden’s tender feet.

barefoot

Chorus—O Mally’s meek, Mally’s sweet,
 Mally’s modest and discreet,
 Mally’s rare, Mally’s fair,
 Mally’s ev’ry way compleat.

It were mair meet that those fine feet
 Were weel lac’d up in silken shoon,
 And ’twere more fit that she should sit
 Within yon chariot gilt aboon.

more
shoes
above

Her yellow hair, beyond compare,
 Comes trinkling down her swan-white neck ;
 And her two eyes, like stars in skies,
 Would keep a sinking ship frae wreck.

trickling
from

Poetical pieces not yet given are now introduced :

HOW LONG AND DREARY IS THE NIGHT.

A Gaelic Air.

How long and dreary is the night,
 When I am frae my dearie !
 I sleepless lie frae e'en to morn,
 Tho' I were ne'er so weary ;
 I sleepless lye frae e'en, &c.

When I think on the happy days
 I spent wi' you, my dearie ;
 And now what lands between us lie,
 How can I be but eerie !
 And now what lands, &c.

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours,
 As ye were wae and weary !
 It was na sae—ye glinted by—
 When I was wi' my dearie ;
 It was na sae, &c.

sad
 passed quickly

SONG—A BOTTLE AND FRIEND.

'There's nane that's blest of human kind
 But the cheerful and the gay, man,
 Fal la, la,' &c.

Here's a bottle and an honest friend !
 What wad ye wish for mair, man ?
 Wha kens, before his life may end,
 What his share may be of care, man ?

knows

Then catch the moments as they fly,
 And use them as ye ought, man :
 Believe me, happiness is shy
 And comes not ay when sought, man.

THE NIEL MENZIES' BONIE MARY.*

TUNE—*The Ruffian's Rant.*

In coming by the brig o' Dye,	bridge
At Darlet we a blink did tarry ;	a brief period
As day was dawin in the sky,	dawning
We drank a health to bonie Mary.	

Chorus—Theniel Menzies' bonie Mary,
 Theniel Menzies' bonie Mary ;
 Charlie Gregor tint his plaidie, lost
 Kissin' Theniel's bonie Mary.

Her een sae bright, her brow sae white,	
Her haffet locks as brown 's a berry ;	side-locks
And ay they dimpl't wi' a smile,	
The rosy cheeks o' bonie Mary.	

We lap and danc'd the lee-lang day	live-long
Till Piper lads were wae and weary :	
But Charlie gat the spring to pay	
For kissin' Theniel's bonie Mary.	

THE CAPTIVE RIBBAND.

TUNE—*Robie donna gorrach.*

Dear Myra, the captive ribband 's mine,	
'Twas all my faithful love could gain ;	
And would you ask me to resign	
The sole reward that crowns my pain ?	

Go bid the hero who has run	
Thro' fields of death to gather fame ;	
Go bid him lay his laurels down	
And all his well-earn'd praise disclaim.	

* It has been suggested from Darlet being in Aberdeenshire that this song was inspired by Burns's northern tour.

The ribband shall its freedom lose—
 Lose all the bliss it had with you,
 And share the fate I would impose
 On thee, wert thou my captive too.

It shall upon my bosom live
 Or clasp me in a close embrace;
 And at its fortune if you grieve,
 Retrieve its doom and take its place.

EPPIE ADAIR.

By love and by beauty,
 By law and by duty,
 I swear to be true to
 My Eppie Adair!

Chorus—An' O! my Eppie,
 My jewel, my Eppie!
 Wha wadna be happy
 Wi' Eppie Adair!

A' pleasure exile me,
 Dishonour defile me,
 If e'er I beguile thee,
 My Eppie Adair!

A FIDDLER IN THE NORTH.

TUNE—*The King of France, he rade a Race.*

Amang the trees where humming bees
 At buds and flowers were hinging, O,
 Auld Caledon drew out her drone,
 And to her pipe was singing, O:
 'Twas Pibroch, Sang, Strathspeys and Reels,
 She dirl'd them aff fu' clearly, O;
 When there cam' a yell o' foreign squeels
 That dang her tapsalteerie, O.

drove—
 head over heels

Their capon craws and queer ‘ha, ha’s,’
 They made our lugs grow eerie, O;
 The hungry bike did scrape and fyke
 Till we were wae and weary, O:
 But a royal ghaist,* wha ance was cas’d
 A prisoner aughteen year awa,
 He fir’d a Fiddler in the North †
 That dang them tapsalteerie, O.

ears
 crew—fuss

Burns was not of course likely to mend his breach with the family at Woodley Park by lampooning Mrs Riddel. The evil did not stop here. The Riddels of Carse, by whose fireside he had spent so many happy evenings, took part with their friends at Woodley; and ‘the worthy Glenriddel, deep read in old coins,’ fell out with the poet of the Whistle. In April he died, unreconciled to his friend, who, remembering only his worth and former kindness, immediately penned an elegiac sonnet on the event. It appeared in the local newspaper beneath the announcement of Glenriddel’s death.‡

SONNET ON THE DEATH OF GLENRIDDEL.

No more, ye warblers of the wood, no more,
 Nor pour your descant grating on my soul!
 Thou young-eyed Spring, gay in thy verdant stole,
 More Welcome were to me grim Winter’s wildest roar!
 How can ye charm, ye flowers, with all your dyes?
 Ye blow upon the sod that wraps my friend.
 How can I to the tuneful strain attend?
 That strain flows round th’ untimely tomb where Riddel lies.
 Yes, pour, ye warblers, pour the notes of woe,
 And sooth the Virtues weeping o’er his bier!

* James I. of Scotland, detained eighteen years in the Tower by Henry IV. of England.

† Probably a brother of Neil Gow.

‡ Riddel was buried in Dunscore churchyard. On a plain tombstone the following inscription is cut: ‘To the memory of Robert Riddell, Esq. of Glenriddell, who departed this life on the 21st day of Aprile 1794, in the 38th year of his age.’ Mrs Riddel, his widow, died seven years later at Bath.

The man of worth—and 'hath not left his peer!'—
 Is in his 'narrow house' for ever darkly low.
 Thee, Spring, again with joy shall others greet;
 Me, memory of my loss will only meet.

Among the marks of the friendship between the Poet and the Antiquary were several books. Burns had presented Glenriddel with an interleaved copy of Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*, enriched with many manuscript notes, and also with a copy of the sixth edition (1790) of Adam Smith's *Theory of Moral Sentiments*.* This latter bore inscription:

'To Robert Riddel, Esq., of Glenriddel, this Book is presented by
 ROBT. BURNS.

Had I another Friend more truly mine,
 More lov'd, more trusted, this had ne'er been thine.

R. B.'

He had also transcribed into a volume for him a number of his unpublished poetical pieces; and into another several of his prose compositions. The latter volume was not yet completed; but the former had been sent to Friars' Carse. This volume not being returned before Glenriddel's death, Burns, after an interval, bethought him of reclaiming it—a task rendered difficult by the relation in which he now stood to the family. He sought the good offices of a sister of Mrs Riddel.

TO MISS (WOODLEY?).

[DUMFRIES, *May or June 1794?*]

MADAM—Nothing short of a kind of absolute necessity could have made me trouble you with this letter. Except my ardent and just esteem for your sense, taste and worth, every sentiment arising in my breast, as I put pen to paper to you, is painful. The scenes I have past with the friend of my soul and his amiable connexions! The wrench at my heart to think that he is gone, for ever gone, from me, never more to meet in the wanderings of a weary world! and the cutting reflection of all, that I had most unfortunately, though most undeservedly, lost the confidence of that soul of worth, ere it took its flight!

* The two volumes are at present in the hands of Frank T. Sabine, 118 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, to whom we are obliged for permitting an examination.

These, Madam, are sensations of no ordinary anguish. However you, also, may be offended with some *imputed* improprieties of mine, sensibility, you know, I possess, and sincerity none will deny me.

To oppose those prejudices which have been raised against me is not the business of this letter. Indeed it is a warfare I know not how to wage. The powers of positive vice I can in some degree calculate and against direct malevolence I can be on my guard; but who can estimate the fatuity of giddy caprice or ward off the unthinking mischief of precipitate folly?

I have a favor to request of you, Madam, and of your sister Mrs Robert Riddel, through your means. You know that at the wish of my late friend I made a collection of all my trifles in verse which I had ever written. They are many of them local, some of them puerile and silly and all of them unfit for the public eye. As I have some little fame at stake, a fame that I trust may live when the hate of those who 'watch for my halting' and the contumelious sneer of those whom accident has made my superiors will, with themselves, be gone to the regions of oblivion, I am uneasy now for the fate of those manuscripts. Will Mrs Riddel have the goodness to destroy them or return them to me? As a pledge of friendship they were bestowed; and that circumstance indeed was all their merit. Most unhappily for me, that merit they no longer possess; and I hope that Mrs Riddel's goodness, which I well know and ever will revere, will not refuse this favor to a man whom she once held in some degree of estimation.

With the sincerest esteem I have the honor to be, Madam, &c.

R. B.

On the 1st April 1794, Woodley Park was advertised for sale. Walter Riddel* soon after inherited Friars' Carse from his brother; and that estate was in like manner advertised in June. It would appear from the following letter, addressed possibly to one of the M'Leods of Raasay, that Burns took an interest in the sale:

TO MR M'LEOD.

DUMFRIES, 18th June 1794.

SIR—The fate of Carse is determined. A majority of the Trustees have fixed its *sale*. Our friend, John Clarke, whom you remember to have met with here, opposed the measure with all his might; but he was overruled. He, wishing to serve Walter Riddel, the surviving brother, wanted the widow to take a given annuity, and make over to him the

* Walter Riddel died about the close of the century. Mrs Riddel lived for some years in apartments at Hampton Court. Then, in 1807, she married Phillips Lloyd Fletcher, a Welsh landowner, but survived her second marriage only a few months, dying on December 15, 1808. Besides her book on Madeira, she wrote verses for publication. She contributed sixteen poems to *The Metrical Miscellany*, London, 1802.

survivancy of the paternal estate ; but luckily, the widow most cordially hates her brother-in-law, and, to my knowledge, would rather you had the estate, though five hundred cheaper, than that Wattie should. In the mean time Wattie has sold his Woodleypark to Colonel Goldie, the last proprietor. Wattie gave £16,000 for it ; laid out better than £2,000 more on it, and has sold it for £15,000. So much for Master Wattie's sense and management, which, *entre nous*, are about the same pitch as his worth.

The Trustees have appointed a gentleman to make out an estimate of the value of the *terra firma* in the estate, which you know is by far the principle article in the purchase : the house and woods will be valued by some professional man. The gentleman they have pitched on is a Mr Wm. Stewart, factor and manager for Mr Menteach of Closeburn. Stewart is my most intimate friend ; and has promised me a copy of his estimate—but please let this be a dead secret. Stewart was the intimate and confidential friend of poor Riddel that is gone, and will be trusted and consulted in all the business ; and from him I am to know every view and transaction. I assure you it has cost me some manœuvring to bring this to bear ; but as this kind of underhand intelligence may and will be of very considerable service to you, if you are still thinking of the purchase, I have in a manner beset and waylaid my friend Stewart, untill I have prevailed on him. By this day se'ennight Stewart will have made out his estimate, and against that day, you shall hear from me. As soon as the advertisement appears in the paper, which will be, Stewart tells me, in a fortnight or so, I will go over the woods with an acquaintance of mine, who is a twenty years experienced judge in the way of buying woods ; and you shall have the exact value of every stick on the property. I could not go over the estate in that way, you know, untill the sale be formally announced. The idea of the Trustees is, to bring on the sale in October ; so that the purchaser may enter at Martinmass.

Now, my lately-acquired, but much-valued and highly-honor'd Friend, let me urge you to be in earnest with this business. Here is positively the most beautiful spot in the lowlands of Scotland ; absolutely the masterpiece of Nature in that part of the kingdom ; and would you not wish to call it yours ? This country is charmingly romantic and picturesque, in the whole ; 'tis besides highly improving and improveable, and a cheap Country to live in. You will be within six miles of the third town for importance and elegance in Scotland—your neighbourhood will abound in 'Honest men and bonie lasses'—do, come and be happy, and make me in particular, and the whole country happy, by adding Mr M'Leod's worth and Mrs M'Leod's amiableness—not to speak of their splendid fortune and distinguished rank—to this already deserving and enchanting part of the kingdom.

You see with that selfishness I have the honor to be, Dear Sir, your obliged and devoted humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

TO WILLIAM STEWART.

In honest Bacon's ingle-neuk	chimney-corner
Here maun I sit and think,	must
Sick o' the world and world's folk,	
An' sick, damn'd sick, o' drink !	

I see, I see there is nae help,	
But still down I maun sink,	
Till some day laigh enough, I yelp	low
'Wae worth that cursèd drink !'	woe befall

Yestreen, alas ! I was sae fu'	Yesterday—drunk
I could but yisk and wink ;	hiccup
And now, this day, sair, sair I rue	sorely
The weary, weary drink.	

Satan, I fear thy sooty claws,	
I hate thy brunstane stink,	brinstone
And ay I curse the luckless cause—	
The wicked soup o' drink.	sup

In vain I would forget my woes
 In idle rhyming clink,
 For, past redemption damn'd in prose,
 I can do nought but drink.

To you, my trusty, well-tried friend,
 May heaven still on you blink !
 And may your life flow to the end,
 Sweet as a dry man's drink !

[R. B.]

YOU'RE WELCOME, WILLIE STEWART.*

Come, bumpers high, express your joy,	
The bowl we maun renew it,	must
The tappet hen, gae bring her ben	quart measure
To welcome Willie Stewart.	

* This song was inscribed on a crystal tumbler, which was acquired by Sir Walter Scott and is preserved at Abbotsford.

Chorus—You 're welcome, Willie Stewart !
 You 're welcome, Willie Stewart !
 There 's ne'er a flower that blooms in May
 That 's half sae welcome 's thou art !

May foes be strang and friends be slack ;
 Ilk action, may he rue it ; Every
 May woman on him turn her back
 That wrangs thee, Willie Stewart !

TO MR WILLIAM STEWART, CLOSEBURN.*

GLENCAIRN KIRK, *Thursday Evening.*

MY DEAR SIR—Smellie's *Philosophy of Natural History* I had lent to Mr Findlater ; and he is in Edinburgh at present. I tell you this because I hate breaking a promise, were it even to the most . . . that ever . . . much less to a Man whose head is a credit, and whose heart is an honor, to the works of God.

That Misconduct or Mischance may never put a weapon in the hands of Ill-luck to wound your peace is the prayer of

ROBT. BURNS.

The William Stewart to whom this letter is addressed, and who figures in the preceding poems, deserves some attention not only as the father of the Polly Stewart celebrated by Burns, but as one of the poet's most intimate friends at this period. He was born about 1750 in the parish of Closeburn, where his father kept a public-house. When he grew up, he tried his fortune in England. According to local tradition, he turned up as 'a travelling Scotchman' in Lincolnshire, and in the course of business called in 1783 at the Rectory of Barrowby, and was asked by the Rev. James Stuart Menteith, the Rector, if he had any personal knowledge of the Closeburn property, then advertised for sale. The result of this inquiry was the purchase by Mr Menteith of Closeburn estate from its proprietor Kirkpatrick, and the appointment of Stewart as his resident factor. It was at this time that 'Willie' and the poet became friendly ; doubtless their intimacy was strengthened

* Here first included in the biography of Burns from the MS. in the Burns Monument at Kilmarnock. A few words are erased from the MS.

by the fact of Stewart's sister Catherine being married to Bacon, the landlord of Brownhill Inn. He resigned his factorship—the date is given as 1793 but was probably later—and took a farm on his own account in the parish of Morton on the Queensberry estate. There he remained till 1806, when he retired to Maxwelltown. From his will we learn that 'he possessed the lands of Bilbow and the houses built thereon lying in the parish of Troqueer; he was tenant of three farms belonging to the Duke of Queensberry, and joint-tenant of Kelhead Lineworks; and he held one-fourth share of the woollen manufactory carried on at Campsie under the firm of Stewart, Mathison, & Co.* William Stewart died in 1812, and was buried in Closeburn Churchyard.

TO MR PETER HILL.

[May 1794.]

MY DEAR FRIEND—Allow me to introduce Mr Findlater to you, our Supervisor of Excise, and a gentleman of great information and the first worth. I lie and have long lain under great obligations to him, and by way of recompense (and what I assure you I think no small one) I wish to make him acquainted with a man of worth equal to his own, and of respectability, I am happy to hear, great and daily increasing. He is just going; so I have not a moment to tell you of my poetic business. Of that soon.

I have been making a Collection of all the blotted scrolls of any letters I have written and which I had scrolled, which I intended to have given to poor Glenriddel. Alas! he is gone! and in him a worthy Friend, both of yours and mine. Many of my letters to you you were pleased to think well of, but writing to you was always the ready business of my heart and I scarcely ever scrolled a line. Perhaps a perusal of my Manuscript would please you. You shall have it.

Findlater can wait no longer. Let me recommend him to your civilities.

Adieu!

ROBT. BURNS.†

* From a paper on 'Lovely Polly Stewart,' read on 3d April 1885 at a meeting of the Dumfriesshire Natural History and Antiquarian Society by Mr James Barbour, to whom I am indebted for many particulars relating to William and Mary Stewart, and who has in his possession the wills of William Stewart, his sister Mrs Bacon, and Hannah Lee his step-daughter. Mr Barbour also possesses some very pathetic letters written in 1833 by 'Polly' from Switzerland to Mr Pagan, innkeeper, Maxwelltown, making inquiries as to her children. In these she styles herself 'Mary Stewart Fleitz,' and gives as her address 'Lanfanburg en Suisse, Canton D'Argavio.'—W. W.

† First published (with fac-simile) in *The Complete Works of Robert Burns* (vol. vi., Philadelphia, 1886), with note: 'The original of this letter . . . is in the collection of Mr Ferdinand J. Dreer, of Spruce Street, Philadelphia.'

The fact that the sonnet on Glenriddel was almost the only product of the first half of 1794 shows that Burns must then have been in a very melancholy frame of mind. During this dismal period even the pleasant labours into which he had been drawn by Thomson were nearly at a standstill—the following being the only portion of the correspondence which belongs to it:

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 17th April 1794.

MY DEAR SIR—Owing to the distress of our friend [Cunningham] for the loss of his child, at the time of his receiving your admirable but melancholy letter, I had not an opportunity, till lately, of perusing it.* How sorry I am to find Burns saying ‘Canst thou minister to a mind diseased?’ while he is delighting others from one end of the island to the other. Like the hypochondriac who went to consult a physician upon his case—‘Go,’ says the doctor, ‘and see the famous Carlini, who keeps all Paris in good-humour.’ ‘Alas! Sir,’ replied the patient, ‘I am that unhappy Carlini!’†

Your plan for our meeting together pleases me greatly and I trust that by some means or other it will soon take place; but your bacchanalian challenge almost frightens me, for I am a miserably weak drinker!

Allan is much gratified by your good opinion of his talents. He has just begun a sketch from your ‘Cotter’s Saturday Night’ and, if it pleases himself in the design, he will probably etch or engrave it. In subjects of the pastoral and humorous kind he is, perhaps, unrivalled by any artist living. He fails a little in giving beauty and grace to his females; and his colouring is sombre, otherwise his paintings and drawings would be in greater request.

I like the music of the ‘Sutor’s Tochter’ and will consider whether it shall be added to the last volume. Your verses to it are pretty; but your humorous English song to suit ‘Jo Janet’ is inimitable. What think you of the air ‘Within a mile of Edinburgh?’ It has always struck me as a modern English imitation; but it is said to be Oswald’s, and is so much liked that I believe I must include it. The verses are little better than nanby-pamby. Do you consider it worth a stanza or two?

G. T.

Cromek states that ‘in a conversation with his friend Mr Perry—the proprietor of *The Morning Chronicle*—Mr Miller

* The letter to Mr Cunningham, dated 25th February.

† Carlo Antonio Bertinazzi, professionally known as Carlino (*sic*) (1713–83), Italian clown and improvisator, settled in Paris in 1741, and till his death was harlequin *par excellence*. The story is usually told of Grimaldi, who was born in 1779.

[younger of Dalswinton] represented to that gentleman the insufficiency of Burns's salary to answer the imperious demands of a numerous family. In their sympathy for his misfortunes, and in their regret that his talents were nearly lost to the world of letters, these gentlemen agreed on the plan of settling him in London. To accomplish this most desirable object, Mr Perry very spiritedly made the poet a handsome offer of an annual stipend for the exercise of his talents in his newspaper.* Burns's reasons for refusing this offer are stated in the present letter:'

TO PATRICK MILLER, JUN., ESQ.

[DUMFRIES, *Beginning of May 1794.*]†

DEAR SIR—Your offer is indeed truly generous and most sincerely do I thank you for it; but in my present situation I find that I dare not accept it. You well know my political sentiments; and were I an insular individual, unconnected with a wife and a family of children, with the most fervid enthusiasm I would have volunteered my services: I then could and would have despised all consequences that might have ensued.

My prospect in the Excise is something; at least, it is, encumbered as I am with the welfare, the very existence, of near half-a-score of helpless individuals, what I dare not sport with.

In the mean time, they are most welcome to my Ode ['Scots wha hae']; only, let them insert it as a thing they have met with by accident, and unknown to me.—Nay, if Mr Perry, whose honor, after your character of him I cannot doubt, if he will give me an address and channel by which any thing will come safe from these spies with which he may be certain that his correspondence is beset, I will now and then send him any bagatelle that I may write. In the present

* Sir Walter Scott's view of the attempt to enlist Burns in the ranks of journalism may here appropriately be given in his own words: 'Perry, of the *Morning Chronicle*, through my informer Mr Miller, offered Burns five guineas a week as an occasional correspondent, also guerdon as a reporter and as a general contributor if he would settle in London. He declined it, alleging his excise situation was a certain provision which he did not like to part with. Mr Miller seemed to think his refusal was rather to be imputed to his reluctance to part with his associates in Dumfries. I think it must have been a natural dislike of regular labour of a literary kind. I think the famous "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled" first appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*. I remember reading it in that paper, announced as being either a song of ancient times or an imitation by the first of our living poets.'—*The Life and Letters of John Gibson Lockhart* (1896), by Andrew Lang (vol. ii. pp. 12, 13).

† Cromek (who first published this letter) ascribed the incident to November 1794; it is now removed to what is undoubtedly its proper date (*May*). The fact that the 'Ode' referred to (it was 'Scots wha hae'; not, as Mr Scott Douglas conjectured, the 'Ode for General Washington's Birthday') appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* of May 8, 1794, and that two days later appeared 'Wilt thou be my dearie?' settles the point. Burns had sent a copy of 'Scots wha hae' to Miller in January preceding; Miller seems to have requested permission to have it inserted in Perry's paper.

hurry of Europe, nothing but news and politics will be regarded; but against the days of peace, which Heaven send soon, my little assistance may perhaps fill up an idle column of a Newspaper. I have long had it in my head to try my hand in the way of little Prose Essays, which I propose sending into the world through the medium of some Newspaper; and should these be worth his while, to these Mr Perry shall be welcome; and all my reward shall be, his treating me with his Paper; which, by the bye, to any body who has the least relish for wit, is a high treat indeed. How do you like the following clinch?

EXTEMPORE,

PINNED TO A LADY'S COACH.

If you rattle along like your mistress's tongue,
 Your speed will out-rival the dart:
 But, a fly for your load, you'll break down on the road
 If your stuff be as rotten's her heart.

NITH.

If your friends think this worth insertion, they are welcome.
 Almost every day I am manufacturing these little trifles, and, in a dearth of news, they may have a corner.

Voila un atre—

EPIGRAM ON A NOTED COXCOMB.

[CAPTAIN WILLIAM RODDICK OF CORBISTON.]

'Light lay the earth on Billy's breast,'
 His chicken heart so tender;
 But build a castle on his head,
 His scull will prop it under.

CLINCHER.

This is also theirs, if they please. [Neither of the epigrams was inserted.] With the most grateful esteem, I am ever, Dear Sir, Your most obedient,

ROBT. BURNS.

P.S.—A new Scots song. TUNE, *The Sutor's Tochter*.Wilt thou be my Dearie? [See *ante*, p. 96.]

Clearly Burns was afraid to make the plunge into the unknown waters of literary London. There was nothing of the speculative

in his disposition, and the responsibility attaching to the position of husband and father always rested heavily upon him. If it is possible that he could have fitted a London life into his scheme of existence, he was not the man to run the risk of abandoning a good situation with a certain salary for a precarious income to be got by partisan writing. Besides, his prospects in the Excise were at this time brightening; his hopes of an early appointment to a supervisorship were strong.

Again, it must be borne in mind that Burns, though certainly not a rich man, and though he had some small debts hanging over his head, was not quite so sunk in poverty as to make his refusal of Mr Perry's offer in any degree censurable. His stated official income was £50 a year, which usually rose to £70 by extra allowances for certain departments of business. He had not to keep a horse out of this little income; when he had to ride during the Dumfries period he hired one from an inn, and its expense was charged to the service. There seem to have been other sources of official income, of a more doubtful nature: on the back of a song in his handwriting, he noted:—'I owe Mr Findlater £6, 8s. 5½d. *My share of last year's fine* is £12, 2s. 1d., W. M., £14, 3s. 6d.' If this was anything like the average of some other perquisites, it would make up Burns's official revenue to something above £80 a year. It may also be remarked that his son Robert believed that the poet occasionally made a little money land-surveying—which he had learned at Kirkoswald. Add to all this the solid perquisites which he derived from seizures of contraband spirits, tea, and other articles, which it was then the custom to divide among the officers, and it is plain that Burns's income could not have fallen much below £90 a year. It was indeed a slender income; yet it is certain that very few men of the poet's original profession, out of East Lothian and Berwickshire, drew larger profits from their farms. It is therefore not surprising to learn that Burns, though now and then forced to be beholden to a friend for a small temporary loan—we have seen an example of this when a failure of importation closed one of his sources of extraordinary income—did, nevertheless, in general maintain his household in a reasonable degree of comfort.

The poet's eldest son used to speak of the house in the Mill

Vennel as being one of a good order, such as were used in those days by the better class of citizens, and the life of his father and mother as being comparatively 'genteel.' They always had a maid-servant and sat in their parlour. That room and the two principal bedrooms were carpeted and otherwise well furnished. The poet possessed a mahogany dining-table, and good company often put their legs under it. In the same room stood his folding desk. Not to speak of the spoils of smugglers, the poet received many presents of game and country produce from his county friends, besides occasional barrels of oysters from Hill, Cunningham, and other friends in town. It is just possible that he was as much envied by some of his neighbours as he has since been pitied by the world.

Jessy Lewars (afterwards Mrs James Thomson) had similar recollections of the household in the Mill Vennel. 'As far as Burns was left to be guided by his own inclinations, his personal domestic habits were generally simple and temperate. As he was often detained by company from the dinner provided for him by his wife, she sometimes, if she thought he was likely to be absent, would not prepare that meal for him. When he chanced to come home and find no dinner ready, he was never in the least irritated, but would address himself with the greatest cheerfulness to any makeshift set before him. They generally had abundance of good Dunlop cheese, sent to them by their Ayrshire friends. The poet would sit down to bread and cheese, with his book by his side, and seem to the casual visitor as happy as a courtier at the feast of kings. He was always anxious that his wife should be well and neatly dressed, and did his utmost to counteract any tendency to carelessness—which she sometimes excused by alleging the duties of a nurse and mother—not only by gentle remonstrance, but by buying for her the best clothes he could afford. He rarely omitted to get for her any little novelty in female dress. She was, for instance, one of the first persons in Dumfries to wear a dress of gingham—a stuff which was at its first introduction rather costly, and used almost exclusively by the well-to-do.'

On the whole, it must be held that Burns's poverty at this and perhaps at several other periods of his life has been overstated. After settling in Dumfries, he certainly was without spare funds, or anything that could be considered as an ultimate provision for

his family. But of the necessities of life he never was in any want, nor, down to the last few months, were even comforts lacking.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

May 1794.

MY DEAR SIR—I return you the plates, with which I am highly pleased, only your criticism on the grouping of the young lad being introduced to the mother excepted. There I entirely agree with you. I would humbly propose that No. 1, instead of the younker knitting stockings, I would, in preference to your ‘trump,’ put a stock and horn [a shepherd’s pipe] among his hands, as if he were screwing and adjusting it. I would have returned them sooner, but I waited for the opinion of a friend of mine, who is positively the ablest judge on the subject I have ever met with, and though an unknown, is yet a superior artist with the *Burin*, and he is quite charmed with Allan’s manner. I got him a peep of the ‘Gentle Shepherd;’ and he pronounces Allan a most original artist of great excellence.

For my part, I look on Mr Allan’s choosing my favorite poem for his subject, to be one of the highest compliments I have ever received.

I am quite vexed at Pleyel’s being cooped up in France, as it will put an entire stop to our work. Now, and for six or seven months, *I shall be quite in song*, as you shall see by and by. I know you value a composition, because it is made by one of the Great Ones, as little as I do. However, I got an air, pretty enough, composed by Lady Elizabeth Heron of Heron, which she calls ‘The Banks of Cree.’ Cree is a beautiful romantic stream, and as her Ladyship is a particular friend of mine, I have written the following song to it.

THE BANKS OF CREE.

TUNE—*The Banks of Cree.*

Here is the glen and here the bower,
 All underneath the birchen shade;
 The village-bell has tolled the hour,
 O what can stay my lovely maid?

’Tis not Maria’s whispering call;
 ’Tis but the balmy-breathing gale
 Mixt with some warbler’s dying fall,
 The dewy star of eve to hail.

It is Maria's voice I hear ;
 So calls the woodlark in the grove
 His little, faithful mate to chear :
 At once 'tis music—and 'tis love.

And art thou come ? and art thou true ?
 O welcome, dear, to love and me !
 And let us all our vows renew,
 Along the flowery banks of Cree.

The air, I fear, is not worth your while, else I would send it you. I am hurried ; so farewell until next post. My 'seal' is all well, except that my holly must be a *bush*, not a *tree*, as in the present shield. I also inclose it ; and will send the pebble by the first opportunity.—Yours,
 R. B.

It is to the latter part of this year that is generally assigned an anecdote which Lockhart obtained from David M'Culloch of Ardwell, Kirkecudbrightshire—then a young man on intimate terms with the poet.* According to Lockhart, 'Mr M'Culloch was seldom more grieved than, when riding into Dumfries one fine summer evening to attend a county ball,† he saw Burns walking alone on the shady side of the principal street of the town, while the opposite side was gay with successive groups of ladies and gentlemen, all drawn together for the festivities of the night, not one of whom appeared willing to recognise him. The horseman dismounted and joined Burns, who, on his proposing to him to cross the street, said : "Nay, nay, my young friend—that's all over now ;" and quoted after a pause some verses of Lady Grizel Baillie's pathetic ballad :

His bonnet stood ance fu' fair on his brow,
 His auld ane looked better than monie ane's new ;
 But now he let 's wear ony gate it will hing, any way—hang
 And casts himsel' dowie upon the corn-bing. sad—heap

* In the minute of the meeting of the Dumfries St Andrew's Lodge for May 6, 1794, D. M'Culloch is admitted a member. Burns is not mentioned in the list of those present.

† The King's Birthday of 1794 was, according to the local newspaper, celebrated in Dumfries with unusual cordiality and variety of demonstrations. Two large dinner-parties met at the inns, and at six o'clock there was a grand *réunion* in the Town Hall, to drink the king's health. The Loyal Native Club wore ribbons, embroidered by loyal ladies, in their hats, and the multitude was regaled with bonfires. It is probable that this was the occasion of Mr M'Culloch's rencontre with Burns.

Oh, were we young, as we ance hae been,
 We sud hae been galloping down on yon green, should
 And linking it ower the lily-white lea— tripping
And werena my heart light, I would die.

‘It was little in Burns’s character to let his feelings on certain subjects escape in this fashion. He, immediately after citing these verses, assumed the sprightliness of his most pleasing manner; and taking his young friend home with him, entertained him very agreeably until the hour of the ball arrived, with a bowl of his usual potation, and bonnie Jean’s singing of some verses which he had recently composed.’

Burns shortly, however, began to revive from his depression. The summer came on, to tempt him into the country and charm him into song. Time softened the irritation of the superior persons of Dumfries society. Even the political horizon began to clear a little, now that reaction was setting in at Paris, and Robespierre’s downfall was approaching. Britain had stood the first shock of French propagandism; a great naval victory had cheered the ministry; and the propertied classes began to feel less nervous. Burns recovered in a great measure from his depressed state and once more thought that a supervisorship might be in store for him.

It was very probably in consequence of an appointment made at their meeting that Burns wrote as follows to M’Culloch. The allusion to a visit to Heron of Heron at Kerroughtree is characteristic of the justifiably sensitive poet, and also valuable as showing that at least one Whig country gentleman deemed him, in spite of his opinions, presentable at this time in good society.

TO DAVID M’CULLOCH, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR—My long projected journey through your country is at last fixed; and on Wednesday next, if you have nothing of more importance than take a saunter down to Gatehouse, about two or three o’clock, I shall be happy to take a draught of M’Kune’s best with you. Collector Syme will be at Glen’s about that time, and will meet us about dish-of-tea hour. Syme goes also to Kerrochtree; and let me remind you of your kind promise to accompany me there. I will need all the friends I can muster, for I am indeed ill at ease whenever I approach your Honorables and Right Honorables. Yours sincerely,

ROBT. BURNS.

DUMFRIES, 21st June 1794.

TO MRS DUNLOP.

CASTLE DOUGLAS, 25th June 1794.

Here in a solitary inn, in a solitary village, am I set by myself, to amuse my brooding fancy as I may. Solitary confinement, you know, is Howard's favorite idea of reclaiming sinners; so let me consider by what fatality it happens that I have so long been exceeding sinful as to neglect the correspondence of the most valued friend I have on earth. To tell you that I have been in poor health will not be excuse enough, though it is true. I am afraid that I am about to suffer for the follies of my youth. My medical friends threaten me with a flying gout; but I trust they are mistaken.

I am just going to trouble your critical patience with the first sketch of a stanza I have been framing as I paced along the road. The subject is LIBERTY: You know, my honored friend, how dear the theme is to me. I design it as an irregular Ode for General Washington's birth-day. After having mentioned the degeneracy of other kingdoms, I come to Scotland thus:

Thee, Caledonia, thy wild heaths among,
 Thee, famed for martial deed and sacred song,
 To thee I turn with swimming eyes!
 Where is that soul of freedom fled?
 Immingled with the mighty dead
 Beneath that hallowed turf where WALLACE lies!
 Hear it not, WALLACE, in thy bed of death!
 Ye babbling winds, in silence sweep!
 Disturb not ye the hero's sleep,
 Nor give the coward secret breath!
 Is this the power in freedom's war
 That wont to bid the battle rage?

With the additions of—

Behold that eye which shot immortal hate
 Crushing the despot's proudest bearing;
 That arm which, nerved with thundering fate,
 Braved usurpation's boldest daring!
 One quenched in darkness, like the sinking star,
 And one the palsied arm of tottering, powerless age.

You will probably have another scrawl from me in a stage or two.

R. B.

A favourite walk of Burns during his residence in Dumfries was along the right bank of the river above the town to the ruins of Lincluden Abbey and Church, which occupy a romantic situation on a piece of rising-ground in the angle of the junction of the Cluden Water with the Nith. There is one position on a little mound to the south of the church whence two most beautiful views may be had through windows of the old building. It was probably the 'Calvary' of the ancient church precinct. This was a favourite resting-place of the poet. And it stimulated the production of the following eloquent poems, 'A Vision' and 'Ode for General Washington's Birthday,' in honour of his 'dear theme,' Liberty.

'Our poet's prudence suppressed the song of Libertie,' Dr Currie stated in a note to 'A Vision.' In the *Self-interpreting* edition (published at Philadelphia in 1886), the editors, Messrs Hunter and Gebbie, claimed 'to be able to announce that we for the first time present to the world the perfect poem.' They conjecture that the 'Ode to Liberty' (or 'Ode for General Washington's Birthday') was the song the minstrel sang. 'A very careful study' led them to conclude 'that Burns . . . produced the two pieces as a connected whole and nearly at a sitting; but that he must have immediately afterwards seen that it would be unsafe to publish them in that form, and therefore added a verse to the "Vision," or prelude :

"He sang wi' joy his former day,
He, weeping, wail'd his latter times;
But what he said it was nae play—
I winna ventur't in my rhymes."

'This he did to give an air of completeness to what would otherwise have appeared a fragment.'

This theory is, owing to its intrinsic reasonableness, adopted here. 'The Vision' shows in itself that it was intended as prelude to another poem. Besides, the two pieces are in perfect harmony.

PART I.—A VISION.

As I stood by yon roofless tower,
 Where the wa'-flower scents the dewy air, wall-
 Where the howlet mourns in her ivy bower, owl
 And tells the midnight moon her care.

The winds were laid, the air was still,
 The stars they shot along the sky ;
 The fox was howling on the hill
 And the distant-echoing glens reply.

The stream adown its hazelly path
 Was rushing by the ruin'd wa's,
 Hasting to join the sweeping Nith *
 Whase distant roaring swells and fa's. falls

The cauld blue north was streaming forth cold
 Her lights, wi' hissing eerie din ; †
 Athort the lift they start and shift, Athwart—firmament
 Like fortune's favors, tint as win. ‡

By heedless chance I turn'd mine eyes
 And, by the moon-beam, shook, to see
 A stern and stalwart ghaist arise,
 Attir'd as minstrels wont to be. §

Had I a statue been o' stane,
 His darin look had daunted me ;
 And on his bonnet grav'd was plain
 The sacred posy—Libertie !

* Variation—'To join yon river on the Strath.'

† A display of the Aurora Borealis is said to be accompanied by hissing or crackling sounds.

‡ This may be interpreted 'lost as soon as won.'

§ Variation—
 'Now looking over firth and fauld,
 Her horn the pale-faced Cynthia reared ;
 When, lo ! in form of minstrel auld,
 A stern and stalwart ghaist appeared.

And frae his harp sic strains did flow
 Might rous'd the slumb'ring dead to hear ;
 But oh, it was a tale of woe
 As ever met a Briton's ear !

from—such

PART II.—ODE.

No Spartan tube, no Attic shell,
 No lyre Æolian I awake.
 'Tis Liberty's bold note I swell :
 Thy harp, Columbia, let me take !
 See gathering thousands, while I sing,
 A broken chain, exulting, bring,
 And dash it in a tyrant's face,
 And dare him to his very beard,
 And tell him he no more is fear'd—
 No more the despot of Columbia's race !
 A tyrant's proudest insults brav'd,
 They shout a People freed ! They hail an Empire sav'd !

Where is man's godlike form ?
 Where is that brow erect and bold,
 That eye that can, unmov'd, behold
 The wildest rage, the loudest storm
 That e'er created Fury dared to raise ?
 Avaunt ! thou caitiff, servile, base,
 That tremblest at a despot's nod,
 Yet, crouching under the iron rod,
 Canst laud the hand that struck th' insulting blow !
 Art thou of man's Imperial line ?
 Dost boast that countenance divine ?
 Each skulking feature answers, No !
 But come, ye sons of Liberty,
 Columbia's offspring, brave as free,
 In danger's hour still flaming in the van,
 Ye know, and dare maintain, the Royalty of Man !

Alfred ! on thy starry throne
 Surrounded by the tuneful choir,
 The Bards that erst have struck the patriot lyre,
 And rous'd the freeborn Briton's soul of fire,
 No more thy England own !
 Dare injured nations from the great design
 To make detested tyrants bleed ?
 Thy England execrates the glorious deed !
 Beneath her hostile banners waving,
 Every pang of honour braving,
 England in thunder calls 'The Tyrant's cause is mine !'
 That hour accurst how did the fiends rejoice,
 And Hell thro' all her confines raise th' exulting voice !
 That hour which saw the generous English name
 Link't with such damnèd deeds of everlasting shame !

Thee, Caledonia ! thy wild heaths among,
 Fam'd for the martial deed, the heaven-taught song,
 To thee I turn with swimming eyes !
 Where is that soul of Freedom fled ?
 Immingled with the mighty dead
 Beneath that hallow'd turf where Wallace lies !
 Hear it not, Wallace, in thy bed of death !
 Ye babbling winds, in silence sweep !
 Disturb not ye the hero's sleep
 Nor give the coward secret breath !
 In this the ancient Caledonian form,
 Firm as her rock, resistless as her storm ?
 Show me that arm which, nerv'd with thundering fate,
 Crush'd Usurpation's boldest daring !
 Dark-quench'd as yonder sinking star,
 No more that glance lightens afar,
 That palsied arm no more whirls on the waste of war.

There has been preserved one more letter to Clarinda, which, from several allusions contained in it, seems not unlikely to have been penned at the same time as the preceding epistle to Mrs Dunlop.

TO MRS M'LEHOSE.

[CASTLE DOUGLAS, 25th June 1794.]

Before you ask me why I have not written you, first let me be informed by you, *how* I shall write you. 'In friendship' you say; and I have many a time taken up my pen to try an epistle of 'friendship' to you; but it will not do: 'tis like Jove grasping a pop-gun, after having wielded thunder. When I take up the pen, recollection ruins me. Ah! my ever dearest Clarinda! Clarinda! What a host of memory's tenderest offspring crowd on my fancy at that sound! But I must not indulge that subject. You have forbid it.

I am extremely happy to learn that your health is re-established and that you are once more fit to enjoy that satisfaction in existence which health alone can give us. My old friend Ainslie has indeed been kind to you. I had a letter from him a while ago, but it was so dry, so distant, so like a card to one of his clients that I could scarce bear to read it, and have not yet answered it. He is a good honest fellow, and *can* write a friendly letter, which would do equal honour to his head and his heart, as a whole sheaf of his letters which I have by me will witness; and though Fame does not blow her trumpet at my approach *now*, as she did *then*, when he first honored me with his friendship, yet I am as proud as ever; and when I am laid in my grave I wish to be stretched at my full length, that I may occupy every inch of ground I have a right to.

You would laugh were you to see me where I am just now. Would to Heaven you were here to laugh with me, though I am afraid that crying would be our first employment! Here am I set, a solitary hermit, in the solitary room of a solitary inn, with a solitary bottle of wine by me, as grave and as stupid as an owl, but like that owl, still faithful to my old song; in confirmation of which, my dear Mrs Mac., here is your good health! May the hand-waied [specially-selected] benisons o' Heaven bless your bonie face; and the wratch wha skellies [makes grimaces] at your welfare, may the auld tinkler deil get him, to clout [patch] his rotten heart! Amen.

You must know, my dearest Madam, that these now many years, wherever I am, in whatever company, when a married lady is called as a toast, I constantly give you; but as your name has never passed my lips, even to my most intimate friend, I give you by the name of 'Mrs Mac.' This is so well known among my acquaintances that when any married lady is called for, the toast-master will say: 'O, we need not ask him who it is: here's Mrs Mac!' I have also, among my convivial friends, set on foot a round of toasts, which I call a round of Arcadian Shepherdesses, that is, a round of favourite ladies, under female names celebrated in ancient song; and then you are my 'Clarinda.' So, my lovely Clarinda, I devote this glass of wine to a most ardent wish for your happiness.

In vain would Prudence with decorous sneer
 Point out a censuring world, and bid me fear :
 Above that world on wings of love I rise,
 I know its worst and can that worst despise.

‘Wronged, injured, shunned, unpitied, unredrest,
 The mocked quotation of the scorner’s jest,’
 Let Prudence’ direst bodements on me fall,
 Clarinda, rich reward ! o’erpayes them all.

I have been rhyming a little of late, but I do not know if they are worth postage.

Tell me what you think of the following monody.*

The subject of the foregoing is a woman of fashion in this country, with whom, at one period, I was well acquainted. By some scandalous conduct to me, and two or three other gentlemen here as well as me, she steered so far to the north of my good opinion that I have made her the theme of several illnatedured things. The following Epigram† struck me the other day, as I passed her carriage.

PINNED TO MRS R[IDDEL]’S COACH.

If you rattle along like your Mistress’s tongue,
 Your speed will out-rival the dart ;
 But, a fly for your load, you ’ll break down on the road
 If your stuff be as rotten’s her heart.

R. B.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

July 1794.

Is there no news yet, my dear Sir, of Pleyel ? Or is your work to be at a dead stop, until these glorious Crusaders, the Allies, set our modern Orpheus at liberty from the savage thraldom of Democrat Discords ? Alas the day ! And woe is me ! That auspicious period, pregnant with the happiness of Millions—that golden age, spotless with Monarchical innocence and Despotic purity—That Millenium, of which the earliest

* ‘Monody on a lady famed for her caprice,’ see pp. 79, 80.

† The manuscript of the closing portion—beginning ‘Tell me’—of this letter is now in the National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh.

dawn will enlighten even Republican turbulence and show the swinish multitude that they are but beasts and, like beasts, must be led by the nose and goaded in the backside—these days of sweet chords and concords seem by no means near.

O that my eyes were fountains of waters, for thy rueful sake, poor Prussia! * that as thy ire has deluged the plains of Flanders, so might my grief inundate the regions of Gallovidia [Galloway]! Ye children of success, ye sons of prosperity—ye who never shed the tear of sorrow or felt a wish unsatisfied, spare your reproaches on the left-handed shifts and shuffling of unhappy Brandenburg! Once was his Rectitude straight as the shafts of the Archers of Edina and stubborn as the granite of Gallovidian hills—the Batavian witnessed his bowels of compassion and Sarmatia [Russia] rejoiced in his truth. But alas! ‘The needy man who has known better times [can only console himself with a song, thus’]:—

A TIPPLING BALLAD,†

ON THE DUKE OF BRUNSWICK’S BREAKING UP HIS CAMP, AND THE
DEFEAT OF THE AUSTRIANS BY DUMOURIEZ, NOV. 1792.

When Princes and Prelates
And hot-headed zealots
All Europe had set in a lowe, flame
The poor man lies down,
Nor envies a crown,
And comforts himself, &c.,
And comforts himself, &c.

* * * * *

But truce with commotions
And new-fangled notions,
A bumper, I trust, you’ll allow :
Here’s George, our good king,
And Charlotte his queen,
And lang may they ring, &c.

* Frederick William II. of Prussia carried on a very expensive and useless war with Holland in 1787. With utterly exhausted finances, he in April 1794 agreed to the humiliating Treaty of the Hague, by which he hired out an army of 64,000 men to England and the coalition against France.

† The complete ballad contains eight stanzas and a chorus, and is included in *The Merry Muscs.*

So much for nonsense ! I have sent you by my much-valued friend, Mr Syme of this place, the pebble for my seal. You will please remember that my holly is a bush, not a tree.

I have three or four songs on the way for you ; but I have not yet put the last hand to them. Pray, are you going to insert ' Bannoekburn ' or ' Wilt thou be my dearie ? ' in your Collection ? If you are not, let me know ; as in that case I will give them to Johnson's *Museum*. I told you that our friend Clarke is quite an enthusiast in the idea that the air ' Nancy 's to the green-wood gane ' is capable of sentiment and pathos in a high degree. In this, if I remember right, you did not agree with him. I intend setting my verses which I wrote and sent you, for ' The last time I came o'er the moor ' to this air. I have made an alteration in the beginning of the song, which you will find on the new page.

Song—*Tune*, ' Nancy 's to the greenwood gane.'

Farewell, thou stream that winding flows
Around Eliza's dwelling ! &c.*

I have presented a copy of your songs to the daughter of a much-valued and much-honored friend of mine, Mr Graham of Fintry. I wrote on the blank side of the title-page the following address to the young lady :—

Here, where the Scottish Muse immortal lives
In sacred strains and tuneful numbers joined,
Accept the gift ; though humble he that gives,
Rich is the tribute of the grateful mind.

So may no ruffian feeling in thy breast
Discordant jar thy bosom-chords among !
But Peace attune thy gentle soul to rest,
Or Love ecstatic wake his seraph song !

Or Pity's notes in luxury of tears,
As modest Want the tale of woe reveals ;
While conscious Virtue all the strain endears,
And heaven-born Piety her sanction seals !

[DUMFRIES, 31st January 1794.]

I have also promised the young lady a copy of your Sonatas : will you have the goodness to send a copy, directed to Miss Graham of Fintry ?

* See p. 166.

Another friend of mine goes to town in a week or so, when you shall again have another packet of nonsense from—Yours, R. B.

Though Burns had on several occasions, in 1793, acted on his own principle, 'to jouk and let the jaw flee o'er,' he sometimes liberated his soul about passing events, both in conversation and in private letters. In a lady's pocket-book he inscribed an extempore quatrain :

Grant me, indulgent Heaven, that I may live
To see the miscreants feel the pains they give ;
Deal Freedom's sacred treasures free as air,
Till Slave and Despot be but things which were.

More bitter was the verse which he called—

THE CREED OF POVERTY.

In Politics if thou wouldst mix,
And mean thy fortunes be ;
Bear this in mind, be deaf and blind,
Let great folks hear and see.

Burns and Syme, with a physician named Maxwell,* who afterwards attended the poet on his death-bed, and several others, all liberals and opponents of the government, held occasional symposia of a strictly private nature, at which they could speak their minds freely. It is said that they locked the door of the room in which they met, a circumstance which would, of course, set the popular imagination at work, and draw upon them unwarrantable suspicions. An opposition club of Anti-Gallicans was formed, with the title of the 'Loyal Natives ;'† and it appears that one of the members ventured on one occasion to launch a political pellet at the three friends of the people. A very miserable pellet it was :—

* Dr Maxwell was one of the Maxwells of Kirkconnel. He was educated in France, and commenced practice in Paris. He took part in the Revolution, and was one of the National Guards at the execution of the king. It was only in this year (1794) that he came home and settled in Dumfries, where he lived and worked till 1834, when he retired. He was naturally a kind of head centre of the liberal party in the town.

† It was first established on 18th January 1793 'for Preserving Peace, Liberty, and Property, and for supporting the Laws and Constitution of the Country.'

Ye Sons of Sedition, give ear to my song :
 Let Syme, Burns and Maxwell pervade every throng,
 With Craken, the attorney, and Mundell, the quack,
 Send Willie, the monger, to hell with a smack.

This being handed across the table to Burns at one of the meetings of the reformers, he instantly endorsed it with—

Ye true 'Loyal Natives,' attend to my song :
 In uproar and riot rejoice the night long !
 From Envy and Hatred your corps is exempt,
 But where is your shield from the darts of Contempt ?

It is far from likely that the whole of the democratic poems of Burns have come down to us. For many years that kind of authorship was attended with so much obloquy that his friends studied rather to conceal than to circulate MSS. that might have brought him into trouble. And even after his death the interests of his young family appeared to demand that nothing should be brought forward which was calculated to excite political feeling against him. Hence, for many years the subject was wrapped in mystery. During that time many manuscripts must have perished. There is one piece which was probably written or at least freely touched up by Burns and which, but for the ultra-Jacobinical fashion in which it introduces the name of the unfortunate Louis XVI., might have been read by the poet's contemporaries without any pain, as expressing only the feelings of a man who was too sanguine about the success of the popular cause of France :—

THE TREE OF LIBERTY.

Heard ye o' the tree o' France ?	
I watna what's the name o' 't ;	wot not
Around it a' the patriots dance,	
Weel Europe kens the fame o' 't.	knows
It stands where ance the Bastile stood,	
A prison built by kings, man,	
When Superstition's hellish brood	
Kept France in leading-strings, man.	

Awa they gaed wi' mock parade,
 Like beagles hunting game, man,
 But soon grew weary o' the trade
 And wished they 'd been at hame, man.

went

For Freedom, standing by the tree,
 Her sons did loudly ca', man ;
 She sang a sang o' liberty,
 Which pleased them ane and a', man.
 By her inspired, the new-born race
 Soon drew the avenging steel, man ;
 The hirelings ran—her foes gied chase
 And banged the despot weel, man.

Let Britain boast her hardy oak,
 Her poplar and her pine, man,
 Auld Britain ance could crack her joke,
 And o'er her neighbours shine, man.
 But seek the forest round and round,
 And soon 'twill be agreed, man,
 That sic a tree can not be found
 'Twixt London and the Tweed, man.

once

Without this tree, alake ! this life
 Is but a vale o' woe, man ;
 A scene o' sorrow mixed wi' strife,
 Nae real joys we know, man.
 We labour soon, we labour late,
 To feed the titled knave, man ;
 And a' the comfort we 're to get
 Is that ayont the grave, man.

alas

beyond

Wi' plenty o' sic trees, I trow,
 The warld would live in peace, man ;
 The sword would help to mak a plough,
 The din o' war wad cease, man.
 Like brethren in a common cause
 We 'd on each other smile, man ;
 And equal rights and equal laws
 Wad gladden every isle, man.

such

Wae worth the loon wha wadna eat	woe be to the fellow
Sic halesome dainty cheer, man ;	wholesome
I'd gie my shoon frae aff my feet,	shoes
To taste sic fruit, I swear, man.	
Syne let us pray auld England may	
Sure plant this far-famed tree, man ;	
And blithe we'll sing, and hail the day	
That gave us liberty, man.*	

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 10th August 1794.

MY DEAR SIR—I owe you an apology for having so long delayed to acknowledge the favour of your last. I fear it will be as you say—I shall have no more songs from Pleyel till France and we are friends ; but, nevertheless, I am very desirous to be prepared with the poetry ; and as the season approaches in which your Muse of Coila visits you, I trust, I shall, as formerly, be frequently gratified with the result of your amorous and tender interviews.

G. T.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[30th August 1794.]

The last evening as I was straying out and thinking of 'O'er the Hills and far away,' I spun the following stanzas for it ; but whether my spinning will deserve to be laid up in store like the precious thread of the silk-worm, or brushed to the devil like the vile manufacture of the spider, I leave, my dear Sir, to your usual candid criticism. I was pleased with several lines in it at first ; but I own that now it appears rather a flimsy business. This is just a hasty sketch, until I see whether it be worth a critique. We have many sailor-songs, but, as far as I at present recollect, they are mostly the effusions of the jovial sailor, not the wailings of his love-lorn mistress. I must here make one sweet exception—'Sweet Annie frae the sea-beach came.' Now for the song :

* Originally printed in the People's Edition of Burns (1840), from a manuscript in the possession of James Duncan, Mosesfield, Glasgow. David Robertson, editor of *Whistle Binkie*, did not allow that 'The Tree of Liberty' was anything but a successful imitation of Burns's manner. He 'submitted it to a gentleman of the highest respectability, to whose opinion Burns paid great deference, and to whom he was in the habit of showing his compositions, and he had never heard the poet allude to "The Tree of Liberty."'

ON THE SEAS AND FAR AWAY.

TUNE—*O'er the Hills, &c.*

How can my poor heart be glad,
 When absent from my sailor lad ;
 How can I the thought forego,
 He's on the seas to meet the foe :
 Let me wander, let me rove,
 Still my heart is with my Love :
 Nightly dreams and thoughts by day
 Are with him that's far away.

Chorus—On the seas and far away,
 On stormy seas and far away,
 Nightly dreams and thoughts by day
 Are ay with him that's far away.

When in summer noon I faint,
 As weary flocks around me pant,
 Haply in this scorching sun
 My sailor's thundering at his gun
 Bullets, spare my only joy !
 Bullets, spare my darling boy !
 Fate do with me what you may,
 Spare but him that's far away !

At the starless, midnight hour,
 When Winter rules with boundless power ;
 As the storms the forest tear
 And thunders rend the howling air :
 Listening to the doubling roar
 Surging on the rocky shore,
 All I can—I weep and pray
 For his weal that's far away.

Peace, thy olive wand extend !
 And bid wild war his ravage end !

Man with brother Man to meet
 And as a brother kindly greet :
 Then may Heaven with prosp'rous gales
 Fill my sailor's welcome sails,
 To my arms their charge convey
 My dear lad that's far away.

I give you leave to abuse this song, but do it in the spirit of Christian meekness.—Yours ever, R. B.

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 16 Sept. 1794.

MY DEAR SIR—You have anticipated my opinion of 'On the seas and far away.' I do not think it one of your very happiest productions, though it certainly contains stanzas that are worthy of all acceptance.

The second is the least to my liking, particularly 'Bullets, spare my only joy!' Confound the bullets! It might perhaps be objected to the third verse, 'At the starless midnight hour,' that it has too much grandeur of imagery, and that greater simplicity of thought would have better suited the character of a sailor's sweetheart. The tune it must be remembered, is of the brisk, cheerful kind. Upon the whole, therefore, in my humble opinion, the song would be better adapted to the tune, if it consisted only of the first and last verses, with the choruses.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

Sept. 1794.

Little do the Trustees for our Manufactures, when they frank my letters to you—little do they consider what kind of manufacture they are encouraging. The manufacture of Nonsense was certainly not in idea when the Act of Parliament was framed, and yet, under my hands and your *cover*, it thrives amazingly. Well, there are more pernicious manufactures, that is certain.

I shall withdraw my 'O'er the seas and far away' altogether; it is unequal and unworthy of the work. Making a poem is like begetting a son: you cannot know whether you have a wise man or a fool, until you produce him to the world and try him.

For that reason I send you the offspring of my brain, abortions and



T. Martin Hardie R.S.A.

F. Jenkins, Hellog, Paris.

*Ca' the yowes to the knowes,
Ca' them where the heather grows,
Ca' them where the burnie flows,
My bonnie dearie!*

all; and as such, pray look over them, and forgive them and burn them.*

I am flattered at your adopting 'Ca' the yowes to the knowes,' as it was owing to me that ever it saw the light.† About seven years ago, I was well acquainted with a worthy little fellow of a clergyman, a Mr Clunzie, who sung it charmingly; and, at my request, Mr Clarke took it down from his singing. When I gave it to Johnson, I added some stanzas to the song, and mended others, but still it will not do for *you*. In a solitary stroll which I took to-day, I tried my hand on a few pastoral lines, following up the idea of the chorus, which I would preserve. Here it is, with all its crudities and imperfections on its head.

CA' THE YOWES TO THE KNOWES.

Hark, the mavis' evening sang	thrush's
Sounding Clouden's woods amang;	
Then a-faulding let us gang,	a (sheep) folding—go
My bonie Dearie.	

<i>Chorus</i> —Ca' the yowes to the knowes,	Drive—ewes—knolls
Ca' them whare the heather grows,	
Ca' them whare the burnie rowes,	brooklet rolls
My bonie Dearie.	

We'll gae down by Clouden side,
Through the hazels spreading wide,
O'er the waves, that sweetly glide
To the moon sae clearly.

Yonder Clouden's silent towers,
Where at moonshine midnight hours,
O'er the dewy bending flowers,
Fairies dance sae cheary.

Ghaist nor bogle shalt thou fear;	Ghost—bogey
Thou'rt to Love and Heaven sae dear,	
Nocht of Ill may come thee near,	
My bonie Dearie.	

* This Virgilian order of the poet should, I think, be disobeyed with respect to the song in question, the second stanza excepted.—*Note by Thomson.*

† This very remarkable melody is in the Dorian mode, ending on the fifth, the third being omitted. The song which Burns amended is in Ayrshire attributed to one Isabel Pagan, who kept a public-house near Muirkirk, and who published a small volume—*A Collection of Songs and Poems*—at Glasgow about 1805.

Fair and lovely as thou art,
 Thou hast stown my very heart ; stolen
 I can die—but canna part,
 My bonie Dearie.

I will give you my opinion of your other newly adopted songs, my first scribbling fit. Adieu ! R. B.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[Sept. 1794.]

Do you know, my dear sir, a blackguard Irish song called ‘Oonagh’s Waterfall?’ Our friend Cunningham sings it delightfully. The air is charming, and I have often regretted the want of decent verses to it. It is too much, at least for *my* humble rustic Muse to expect that every effort of hers must have merit: still I think that it is better to have mediocre verses to a favorite air than none at all. On this principle I have all along proceeded in the *Scots Musical Museum*; and as that publication is at its last volume, I intend the following song to the air I mentioned, for that work. If it does not suit you as an Editor, you may be pleased to have verses to it that you may sing it before Ladies.

SHE SAYS SHE LO’ES ME BEST OF A’.

TUNE—*Oonagh’s Waterfall*.

Sae flaxen were her ringlets,	So
Her eyebrows of a darker hue,	
Bewitchingly o’erarching	
Twa laughing e’en o’ bonie blue :	Two—eyes
Her smiling, sae wyling,	enticing
Wad make a wretch forget his wo ;	
What pleasure, what treasure,	
Unto these rosy lips to grow :	
Such was my Chloris’ bonie face,	
When first her bonie face I saw ;	
And ay my Chloris’ dearest charm—	
She says she lo’es me best of a’.	

Like harmony her motion,
 Her pretty ankle is a spy,

Betraying fair proportion
 Wad make a saint forget the sky :
 Sae warming, sae charming,
 Her fauteless form and gracefu' air ;
 Ilk feature—auld Nature
 Declar'd that she could do nae mair.
 Hers are the willing chains o' love,
 By conquering Beauty's sovereign law :
 And still my Chloris' dearest charm—
 She says she lo'es me best of a'.

Let others love the city,
 And gaudy show at sunny noon,
 Gie me the lonely valley,
 The dewy eve, and rising moon
 Fair beaming, and streaming
 Her silver light the boughs amang,
 While falling, recalling,
 The amorous thrush concludes his sang :
 There, dearest Chloris, wilt thou rove
 By wimpling burn and leafy shaw, grove
 And hear my vows o' truth and love,
 And say thou lo'es me best of a'.

Not to compare small things with great, my taste in music is like the mighty Frederic of Prussia's taste in painting: we are told that he frequently admired what the Connoisseurs decried, and always without any hypocrisy confest his admiration. I am sensible that my taste in music must be inelegant and vulgar, because people of undisputed and cultivated taste can find no merit in many of my favorite tunes. Still because I am cheaply pleased, is that any reason why I should deny myself that pleasure? Many of our Strathspeys, ancient and modern, give me most exquisite enjoyment, where you and other judges would probably be shewing signs of disgust. For instance, I am just now making verses for 'Rothemurche's Rant,' an air which puts me in raptures: and in fact, unless I be pleased with the tune I never can make verses to it. Here I have Clarke on my side, who is a judge that I will pit against any of you. 'Rothemurche,' he says, is an air both original and beautiful; and on his recommendation I have taken the first part of the tune for a chorus, and the fourth or last part for the song. I am but two stanzas deep in the work, and possibly you may

think, and justly, that the poetry is as little worth your attention as the music.

[‘Now nature cleeds the flowery lea.’—See p. 164.]

I have begun anew ‘Let me in this ae’ night.’ Do you think that we ought to retain the old chorus? I think we must retain both the old chorus and the first stanza of the old song. I do not altogether like the third line of the first stanza, but cannot alter it to please myself I am just three stanzas deep in it. How do you like this? and would you have the *denouement* to be successful or otherwise? Should she ‘let him in,’ or not?

[‘O lassie, art thou sleepin’ yet?’—See p. 194.]

Did you not once propose ‘The sow’s tail to Geordie,’ as an air for your work? I am quite delighted with it; but I acknowledge that is no mark of its *real* excellence. I once set about verses for it, which I meant to be in the alternate way of a lover and his mistress chanting together. I have not the pleasure of knowing Mrs Thomson’s Christian name, and yours I am afraid is rather burlesque for sentiment, else I had meant to have made you [two] the hero and heroine of the little piece. I had just written four stanzas at random, which I intend to have woven somewhere into, probably at the conclusion of the song.

[The stanzas are the last four of ‘Philly and Willy.’ See *infra*, p. 170.]

So much for an idle farago of a gossiping letter. You once asked my air for ‘Brunswic’s great Prince:’ it is ‘Campbells are comin.’

Do you know a droll Scots song more famous for its humour than delicacy, called ‘The grey goose and the gled?’ Mr Clarke took down the notes, such as they are, at my request, which I shall give with some decenter verses to Johnson. Mr Clarke says that the tune is positively an old chant of the ROMISH CHURCH, which corroborates the old tradition, that at the Reformation, the Reformers burlesqued much of the old Church music with setting them to bawdy verses. As a farther proof; the common name for this song is, ‘Cumnock Psalms.’ As there can be no harm in transcribing a stanza of a Psalm, I shall give you two or three: possibly the song is new to you:—

CUMNOCK PSALMS.

As I looked o’er yon castle wa’
I spied a grey goose and a gled, &c.

So much for the Psalmody of Cumnock.* How do you like the following Epigram, which I wrote the other day on a lovely young

* The song is Fescennine to an unpubbable extent.

girl's recovery from a fever? Dr Maxwell, the identical Maxwell whom Burke mentioned in the House of Commons, was the physician who seemingly saved her from the grave; and to him I address the following:—

TO DR MAXWELL,
ON MISS JESSY STAIG'S RECOVERY.

Maxwell, if merit here you crave,
That merit I deny :
You save fair Jessie from the grave !
An ANGEL could not die !

God grant you patience with this stupid epistle!—Amen!

R. B.

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

I perceive the sprightly Muse is now attendant upon her favourite poet whose woodnotes wild are become as enchanting as ever. 'She says she lo'es me best of a' is one of the pleasantest table songs I have ever seen, and henceforth shall be mine when the song is going round. I'll give Cunningham a copy; he can more powerfully proclaim its merit. I am far from undervaluing your taste for the Strathspey music; on the contrary, I think it highly animating and agreeable, and that some of the Strathspeys when graced with such verses as yours, will make very pleasing songs, in the way that rough Christians are tempered and softened by lovely woman; without whom, you know, they had been brutes.

I am clear for having 'The Sow's Tail,' particularly as your proposed verses to it are so extremely promising. 'Geordie,' as you observe, is a name only fit for burlesque composition. Mrs Thomson's name (Katharine) is not at all poetical. Retain *Jeanie* therefore, and make the other Jamie, or any other that sounds agreeably.

Your 'Ca' the ewes' is a precious little morceau. Indeed I am perfectly astonished and charmed with the endless variety of your fancy. Here let me ask you whether you never seriously turned your thoughts to dramatic writing? That is a field worthy of your genius, in which it might shine forth in all its splendour. One or two successful pieces upon the London stage would make your fortune. The rage at present is for musical dramas; few or none of those which have appeared since *The Duenna** possess much poetical merit: there is little in the conduct of the fable or in the dialogue to interest the audience. They are chiefly

* Sheridan's *Duenna* was brought out with brilliant success in November 1775.

vehicles for music and pageantry. I think you might produce a comic opera in three acts, which would live by the poetry, at the same time that it would be proper to take every assistance from her tuneful sister. Part of the songs of course would be to our favourite Scottish airs; the rest might be left to the London composer—*Storace*,* for Drury Lane, or *Shield*,† for Covent Garden: both of them very able and popular musicians. I believe that interest and manœuvring are often necessary to have a drama brought on; so it may be with the namby-pamby tribe of flowery scribblers; but were you to address Mr Sheridan‡ himself by letter, and send him a dramatic piece, I am persuaded he would, for the honour of genius, give it a fair and candid trial. Excuse me for obtruding these hints upon your consideration. G. T.

TO ROBERT A. RIDDELL, ESQ., NO. 13 HART STREET,
BLOOMSBURY SQUARE, LONDON.§

MY DEAR SIR—You must by this time have set me down as one of the most unkind and ungrateful of the sons of men, not until now to have answered your extremely obliging letter. The fact is, I was determined to answer you in the way of *my trade*; in a poetic Epistle in one of our Newspapers. I have not yet been able to arrange my Numbers to please myself; but if the Muse is not extremely restive, you shall hear, *in my own way*, from—My dear Sir, Your obliged friend and humble servant,

DUMFRIES, 22 Sept. 1794.

ROBT. BURNS.

TO MR ALEX. FINDLATER.

[September 1794.]

MY DEAR SIR—This is the second letter of at least *my directing* which you will receive by this day's post. I have been among the angelic world this forenoon. Ah!

Had ye but been whare I hae been
Ye wad hae been sae canty, O!

But don't be afraid: I did not dare to touch the ark of the Covenant; nor even to cast a prophane eye to the mercy-seat, where it is hid among the feathered cherubim. I am in the clouds elsewhere—

* Stephen Storace (1763–96), dramatic composer, was author of the English operas, *The Haunted Tower*, *The Siege of Belgrade*, &c.

† William Shield (1748–1829), composer of the comic operas, *The Flitch of Bacon*, *The Mysteries of the Castle*, &c.; better known as composer of the songs, 'The Arethusa,' 'The Heaving of the Lead,' &c.

‡ Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751–1816), at this time lessee of Drury Lane Theatre, London.

§ From the MS. in possession of Mr S. J. Davey, Bloomsbury, London. Who the Robert A. Riddell to whom the letter is addressed is not clear; it may be assumed he was a connection of Burns's Dumfriesshire friends.

‘Ah, Chloris, could I now but sit
 As unconcerned as when
 Your infant beauty could beget
 Nor happiness nor pain.’

Let yesternight—Oh yesternight!

‘Kist yestreen, kist yestreen,
 O as I was kist yestreen,
 I’ll ne’er forget while the hollin grows green,
 The bonie sweet lassie I kist yestreen.’

I am truly sorry that God has not given you taste enough to relish
 Rothemurche’s Strathspey, else I would tell you over some verses I have
 begun to it—

Chorus—to the first part of the air—

Lassie wi’ the lintwhite locks,
 Bonie lassie, artless lassie,
 Wilt thou wi’ me tent the flocks?
 Wilt thou be my dearie, O?

1. (to the 4th part.)

Now Nature cleeds the flowery lea,
 And a’ is young and sweet like thee,
 O wilt thou share its joys wi’ me,
 And say thou’lt be my dearie, O?

2.

The primrose bank, the wimplin’ burn,
 The cuckoo on the milk white thorn,
 The wanton lambs at rosy morn
 Shall welcome thee, my dearie, O.

By the bye, I have not been able to please myself with verses to ‘We’ll
 gang nae mair to yon town.’ But I have pledged myself to give to the
 fair Arcadian the original verses on her—

Sylvia
 Thine am I my Celia fair—
 Cloe
 Lesbia.

* * *

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 14th Oct. 1794.

The last eight days have been devoted to the re-examination of the Scottish collections. I have read, and sung, and fiddled, and considered, till I am half blind, and wholly stupid. The few airs I have added are enclosed.

Peter Pindar has at length sent me all the songs I expected from him, which are in general elegant and beautiful. Have you heard of a London collection of Scottish airs and songs, just published by Mr Ritson,* an Englishman? I shall send you a copy. His introductory essay on the subject is curious, and evinces great reading and research, but does not decide the question as to the origin of our melodies; though he shews clearly that Mr Tytler, in his ingenious dissertation, has adduced no sort of proof of the hypothesis he wished to establish, and that his classification of the airs, according to the æras when they were composed, is mere fancy and conjecture. On John Pinkerton, Esq., he has no mercy; but consigns him to damnation! He snarls at my publication on the score of Pindar being engaged to write songs for it; uncandidly and unjustly leaving it to be inferred, that the songs of Scottish writers had been sent a packing to make room for Peter's! Of you he speaks with some respect, and gives you a passing hit or two, for daring to dress up a little, some foolish songs for the *Museum*. His sets of the Scottish airs are taken, he says, from the oldest collections and best authorities; many of them, however, have a strange aspect, and are so unlike the sets which are sung by every person of taste, old or young, in town or country, that we can scarcely recognise the features of our favourites. By going to the oldest collections of our music, it does not follow that we find the melodies in their original state. These melodies had been preserved, we know not how long, by oral communication, before being collected and printed; and as different persons sing the same air very differently, according to their accurate or confused recollection of it, so, even supposing the first collectors to possess the industry, the taste, and discernment to choose the best they could hear (which is far from certain), still it must evidently be a chance, whether the collections exhibit any of the melodies in the state they were first composed. In selecting the melodies for my own collection, I have been as much guided by the living as by the dead. Where these differed, I preferred the sets that appeared to me the most simple and beautiful, and the most generally approved; and without meaning any compliment to my own capability of choosing, or speaking of the pains I have taken, I flatter myself that my sets will be found equally freed from vulgar errors on the one hand, and affected graces on the other.

G. T.

* Ritson's *Collection of Scottish Songs* (2 vols., 1794).

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

19th October 1794.

MY DEAR FRIEND—By this morning's post I have your list, and in general, I highly approve of it. I shall, at more leisure, give you a critique on the whole : in the meantime, let me offer at a new improvement, or rather, restoring of old simplicity, in one of your newly adopted songs :

When she cam ben she bobbit,—*a crotchet stop*
 When she cam ben she bobbit ;—*a crotchet stop*
 And when she cam ben, she kist Cockpen,
 And syne denied that she did it.—*a crotchet stop.*

This is the old rhythm, and by far the most original and beautiful. Let the harmony of the bass, at the stops be full ; and thin and dropping through the rest of the air, and you will give the tune a noble and striking effect. Perhaps I am betraying my ignorance ; but Mr Clarke is decidedly of my opinion. He goes to your town by to-day's Fly, and I wish you would call on him, and take his opinion in general : you know his taste is a standard. He will return here in a week or two ; so, please do not miss asking for him. One thing I hope he will do, which would give me high satisfaction—persuade you to adopt my favorite, 'Craigieburn-wood,' in your Selection : it is as great a favourite of his as of mine. The lady on whom it was made, is one of the finest women in Scotland ; and in fact (*entre nous*) is in a manner to me what Sterne's Eliza* was to him—a Mistress, or Friend, or what you will, in the guileless simplicity of Platonic love. (Now, don't put any of your squinting constructions on this, or have any clishmaclaver about it among our acquaintances.) I assure you that to my lovely Friend you are indebted for many of your best songs of mine. Do you think that the sober gin-horse routine of existence could inspire a man with life, and love, and joy—could fire him with enthusiasm, or melt him with pathos equal to the genius of your Book ? No no !!! Whenever I want to be more than ordinary *in song* ; to be in some degree equal to your diviner airs, do you imagine I fast and pray for the celestial emanation ? *Tout au contraire !* I have a glorious recipe ; the very one that for his own use was invented by the Divinity of Healing and Poesy when erst he piped to the flocks of Admetus. I put myself in a regimen of admiring a fine woman ; and in proportion to the adorability of her charms, in proportion you are delighted with my verses. The lightning of her eye is the godhead of Parnassus, and the witchery of her smile the divinity of Helicon !

To descend to the business with which I began ; if you like my idea

* 'This episode of violently sentimental philandering with an Indian "grass widow" was, in any case, an extremely unlovely passage in Sterne's life. On the best and most charitable view of it, the flirtation, pursued in the way it was and to the length to which it was carried, must be held to convict the elderly lover of the most deplorable levity, vanity, indiscretion, and sickly sentimentalism.'—H. D. Traill on the 'Eliza Episode,' in *Sterne*, 'English Men of Letters' Series,

of 'When she cam ben she bobbie,' the following stanzas of mine, altered a little from what they were formerly when set to another air, may perhaps do instead of worse stanzas:—

SAW YE MY PHELY?*

TUNE—*When she cam ben she bobbie.*

Oh, saw ye my dearie, my Phely?
 Oh, saw ye my dearie, my Phely?
 She's down i' the grove, she's wi' a new Love,
 She winna come hame to her Willy.

What says she, my dearest, my Phely?
 What says she, my dearest, my Phely?
 She lets thee to wit that she has thee forgot,
 And for ever disowns thee her Willy.

O, had I ne'er seen thee, my Phely!
 O, had I ne'er seen thee, my Phely!
 As light as the air, and fause as thou's fair,
 Thou's broken the heart o' thy Willy.

Now for a few miscellaneous remarks. 'The Posie,' is my composition; the air was taken down from Mrs Burns's voice.† It is well known in the West Country, but the old words are trash. By the by—take a look at the tune again, and tell me if you do not think it is the original from which 'Roslin Castle' is composed. The second part, in particular, for the first two or three bars, is exactly the old air.

'Strathallan's lament' is mine: the music is by our right trusty and deservedly well-beloved, Allan Masterton.

The 'Young Highland Rover,' Morag, is also mine; but is not worthy of the fine air.

'Donocht head' is not mine: I would give ten pounds it were. It appeared first in the *Edinburgh Herald*; and came to the Editor of that paper with the Newcastle post-mark on it.‡

* *Quasi dicat* Phillis.—R. B.

† This, and the other poems of which he speaks, had appeared in Johnson's *Museum*, and Mr T. had inquired whether they were our bard's.—CURRIE.

‡ Here is the poem so highly praised by Burns:

'Keen blaws the wind o'er Donocht-Head, §
 The snaw drives snelly through the dale,
 The gaberlunzie tirls my sneek,
 And, shivering, tells his waefu' tale.

§ Dunnet Head, no doubt.

'Whistle o'er the lave o't,' is mine : the music said to be by a John Bruce, a celebrated violin-player in Dumfries about the beginning of this century. This I know, Bruce, who was an honest man, though a red-wud Highlandman, constantly claimed it ; and by all the old musical people here, is believed to be the author of it.

'O how can I be blythe and glad,' is mine ; but as it is already appropriated to an air by itself, both in the *Museum* and from thence into *Ritson*—(I have got that book), I think it would be as well to leave it out. However, do as you please.

'M'Pherson's farewell' is mine, excepting the chorus and one stanza.

'Andrew and his cutty gun,'—the song to which it is set in the *Museum*, is mine, and was composed on Miss Euphemia Murray of Lintrose, commonly and deservedly called, the Flower of Strathmore.

'The Quaker's wife.' Do not give the tune that name, but the old Highland one, 'Leiger'm chose'—the only fragment remaining of the old words is the chorus, still a favorite lullaby of my old mother, from whom I learned it :

Leiger m'chose, my bonie wee lass,
 An leiger m'chose, my dearie ;
 A' the lee-lang winter night,
 Leiger m'chose, my dearie.

The current name for the reel, to this day, at country weddings is 'Liggeram Cosh,' a Lowland corruption of the original Gaelic.

"Cauld is the night, oh, let me in,
 And dinna let your minstrel fa',
 And dinna let his winding-sheet
 Be naething but a wreath o' snaw.

"Full ninety winters hae I seen,
 And piped where gor-cocks whirring flew,
 And monie a day I've danced, I ween,
 To liltis which from my drone I blew."
 My Eppie waked, and soon she cried :
 "Get up, guidman, and let him in ;
 For weel ye ken the winter night
 Was short when he began his din."

My Eppie's voice, oh, wow it's sweet,
 Even though she bans and scanlds a wee ;
 But when it's tuned to sorrow's tale,
 Oh, haith, it's doubly dear to me !
 "Come in, auld carl, I'll steer my fire,
 I'll make it bleeze a bonny flame ;
 Your bluid is thin, ye've tint the gate,
 Ye shouldna stray sae far frae hame."

"Nae hame have I," the minstrel said ;
 "Sad party-strife o'eturned my ha' ;
 And, weeping, at the eve of life,
 I wander through a wreath o' snaw."

Pickering, a Newcastle man, was the author.

I have altered the first stanza, which I would have to stand thus :

Thine am I, my faithful Fair,
Well thou may'st discover ;
Every pulse along my veins
Tells the ardent lover.

'Saw ye my Father.' I am still decidedly of opinion that you should set the tune to the old song, and let mine follow for English verses ; but as you please.

'In simmer when the hay was mawn,' 'An O for ane-and-twenty Tam,' are both mine. The set of the last in the *Museum* does not please me ; but if you will get any of our ancients Scots Fiddlers to play you, in Strathspey time 'The Moudiewort' (that is the name of the air) I think it will delight you.

'How long and dreary is the Night,'—I met with some such words in a collection of songs somewhere, which I altered and enlarged ; and to please you, and to suit your favorite air of 'Cauld Kail,' I have taken a stride or two across my room, and have arranged it anew, as you will find on the other page.

HOW LANG AND DREARY IS THE NIGHT.

TUNE—*Cauld Kail in Aberdeen.*

How lang and dreary is the night
When I am frae my Dearie ;
I restless lie frae e'en to morn,
Though I were ne'er sae weary.

Chorus—For Oh, her lanely nights are lang ;
And Oh, her dreams are eerie ;
And Oh, her widow'd heart is sair,
That's absent frae her Dearie.

weird, dismal

When I think on the lightsome days
I spent wi' thee, my Dearie ;
And now what seas between us roar,
How can I be but eerie ?

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours ;
The joyless day, how dreary :
It was nae sae—ye glinted by—
When I was wi' my dearie ?

passed quickly

Tell me how you like this. I differ from your idea of the expression of the tune. There is, to me, a great deal of tenderness in it. You cannot, in my opinion, dispense with a bass to your addenda airs. A lady of my acquaintance, a noted performer, plays 'Nae Luck about the house,' and sings it at the same time so charmingly, that I shall never bear to see it sent into the world as naked as Mr What-d'ye-call-um has done in his London Collection.*

These English songs gravel me to death. I have not that command of the language that I have of my native tongue. In fact, I think that my ideas are more barren in English than in Scotch. I have been at 'Duncan Gray,' to dress it in English, but all I can do is deplorably stupid. For instance,

LET NOT WOMAN E'ER COMPLAIN.

TUNE—*Duncan Gray.*

Let not Woman e'er complain
Of inconstancy in love ;
Let not Woman e'er complain,
Fickle Man is apt to rove :

Look abroad through Nature's range,
Nature's mighty law is CHANGE ;
Ladies, would it not be strange,
Man should then a monster prove.

Mark the winds, and mark the skies ;
Oceans ebb, and oceans flow ;
Sun and moon but set to rise ;
Round and round the seasons go :

Why then ask of silly Man
To oppose great Nature's plan ?
We'll be constant while we can—
You can be no more you know.

If you insert both Peter's song and mine, to 'The bonie brucket lassie,' it will cost you engraving the first verse of both songs, as the rhythm of the two is considerably different. As 'Fair Eliza' is already published, I am totally indifferent whether you give it a place or not ; but to my

* Ritson.

taste, the rhythm of my song, to that air, would have a much more original effect.

‘Love never more shall give me pain,’ has long been appropriated to a popular air of the same title, for which reason, in my opinion, it would be improper to set it to ‘My lodging is on the cold ground.’ There is a song in the *Museum*, by a *ci-devant* goddess of mine, which I think not unworthy of the air, and suits the rhythm equally with ‘Love never more,’ &c. It begins—

Talk not of love, it gives me pain.

Since the above, I have been out in the country taking a dinner with a friend, where I met with the lady whom I mentioned in the second page of this odds-and-ends of a letter. As usual, I got *into song*; and returning home, I composed the following:—

THE LOVER’S MORNING-SALUTE TO HIS MISTRESS.

TUNE—*Deil tak the Wars.*

Sleep ’st thou, or wauk ’st thou, fairest creature ;	
Rosy morn now lifts his eye,	
Numbering ilka bud which Nature	every
Waters wi’ the tears o’ joy :	
Now through the leafy woods,	
And by the reeking floods ;	
Wild Nature’s tenants, freely, gladly stray ;	
The lintwhite in his bower	linnet
Chants, o’er the breathing flower :	
The lavrock to the sky	lark
Ascends wi’ sangs o’ joy,	
While the sun and thou arise to bless the day.	

Phebus gilding the brow o’ morning
 Banishes ilk darksome shade,
 Nature gladd’ning and adorning ;
 Such to me my lovely maid.
 When absent frae my Fair,
 The murky shades o’ Care
 With starless gloom o’ercast my sullen sky ;
 But when, in beauty’s light,
 She meets my ravish’d sight ;

When through my very heart
 Her beaming glories dart ;
 'Tis then I wake to life, to light and joy ! *

I allow the first four lines of each stanza to be repeated ; but if you inspect the air, in that part, you will find that it, also, without a quaver of difference, is the same passages repeated : which will exactly put it on the footing of our other slow Scottish airs, as they, you know, are twice sung over. If you honor my verses by setting the air to it, I will ramp up the old song, and make it English enough to be understood. I have sent you my song noted down to the air, in the way I think that it should go : I believe you will find my set of the air to be one of the best.

I inclose you a musical curiosity ; an East Indian air, which you would swear was a Scottish one. I know the authenticity of it, as the gentleman who brought it over is a particular acquaintance of mine. Do, preserve me the copy I send you, as it is the only one I have. Clarke has set a Bass to it, and I intend putting it into the *Musical Museum*. Here follow the verses I intend for it :—

THE AULD MAN.

But lately seen in gladsome green	
The woods rejoiced the day,	
Thro' gentle showers the laughing flowers	
In double pride were gay :	
But now our joys are fled	
On winter blasts awa'.	away
Yet maiden May, in rich array,	
Again shall bring them a'.	all

* Variation—

Now to the streaming fountain,
 Or up the heathy mountain
 The hart, hind, and roe, freely, wildly-wanton stray :
 In twining hazel bowers
 His lay the linnet pours ;
 The lavrock, to the sky
 Ascends wi' songs o' joy,
 While the sun and thou arise to bless the day.

When frae my Chloris parted,
 Sad, cheerless, broken-hearted,
 The night's gloomy shades, cloudy, dark, o'ercast my sky :
 But when she charms my sight,
 In pride of Beauty's light ;
 When thro' my very heart
 Her beaming glories dart ;
 'Tis then—'tis then I wake to life and joy !

But my white pow—nae kindly thowe	head—thaw
Shall melt the snaws of Age ;	
My trunk of eild, but buss or beild,	senility—without
Sinks in Time's wintry rage.	bush or shelter
Oh, Age has weary days !	
And nights o' sleepless pain !	
Thou golden time o' Youthfu' Prime,	
Why comest thou not again ! *	

I would be obliged to you if you would procure me a sight of Ritson's Collection of English Songs, which you mention in your letter. I can return them three times a week by the Fly. The Scottish Collection, as I told you, I have gotten.

I will thank you for another information, and that as speedily as you please—whether this miserable, drawling hotch-potch epistle has not compleatly tired you of the correspondence of yours, R. BURNS.

The story of Chloris is not much less romantically tragic than that of Clarinda. At the time when the poet came to Ellisland, William Lorimer, originally a substantial farmer, settled, as has been seen, at Kemmis-hall, on the opposite side of the Nith, about two miles nearer Dumfries. Mr Lorimer had made some money by an extremely favourable lease, and was not only farming but dealing in merchandise on a considerable scale in Dumfries and at Kemmis-hall. Burns came in contact with him through his transactions in teas and spirits, which latter, as appears from a letter to Findlater (Vol. III. p. 260), were occasionally more than dubious. The Lorimers scarcely ever had company at their house without inviting him ; and he was always a welcome guest at Kemmis-hall whenever he passed that way on business. A daughter of the family recollected seeing many letters of his addressed to her father : one contained only the words, 'Coming, sir'—a quaint answer to some friendly note of invitation. 'No exciseman was ever made so much at home as he ; but then, he was the most good-natured of gaugers—of which one little cir-

* It has been assumed, quite unwarrantably, that Burns here alludes to himself. Thus we are assured : 'It seems very evident that the vigour of the poet's constitution before the close of this year, 1794, began to give way under the tear and wear of disappointed hopes and the effects of his occasional imprudent course of life.' Nothing can be clearer than that the 'Auld Man' with his 'white pow' is one of Burns's models, not Burns himself.

cumstance, told by the aforementioned daughter, may be sufficient proof. Having arrived one evening, and, without Mrs Lorimer's knowledge, put up his horse in the stable, he came in by the back-entrance, and so into the kitchen, where the housewife was busy making candles for home consumption—candles being then an excisable article. He looked, but as if he saw nothing, and with the remark, 'Faith, ma'am, you're thrang to-night!' passed hastily on to the parlour.'

William Lorimer's eldest daughter Jean was a young girl of uncommon personal charms. The flaxen colour of her hair was not considered a blemish by the numerous admirers of her beautiful face and fine figure. A Mr Gillespie, a brother-officer of Burns, settled at Dumfries, fell in love with her; and Burns did his best to foster his friend's suit, but in vain. Miss Lorimer made an extraordinary and unfortunate match. A young squire named Whelpdale, connected with the county of Cumberland, and notorious for his extravagant mode of life, settled at Barnhill, near Moffat, as a farmer. He was acquainted with a family named Johnston at Dumcrieff, near Craigieburn, where Miss Lorimer visited, and was introduced to the young beauty. He paid his addresses to her, and it is supposed that she was not averse to his suit. One night in March 1793, when the poor girl was still some months less than eighteen years of age, and probably had little knowledge of the world, he took her aside, told her that he could no longer live except as her husband; entreated her to elope with him that very night to Gretna Green, to be married, and threatened to do himself some terrible mischief if she should refuse. She consented reluctantly, and ruined her life. The pair had not been many months married when Whelpdale's debts forced him to remove hastily from Barnhill, and his young wife had no resource but to return to her parents at Kemmis-hall. She saw her husband no more for twenty-three years!

When Burns settled in Dumfries, his intimacy with the Kemmis-hall family was kept up—and it must be noted that his wife was as much their friend and associate as himself, though perhaps she was not so often at their house. When Jean came home in her worse than widowed state, she was still under nineteen, and in the full bloom of her uncommon beauty. She had inspired Burns

before—'Poortith Cauld' was written in January 1793, three months before her marriage. She now became his poetical divinity under the designation of Chloris. In September 1794—at which time she was exactly nineteen—he began to celebrate her in the series of songs of which two or three have already been introduced.

TO CHLORIS.

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A COPY OF THE LAST EDITION OF
MY POEMS.

'Tis Friendship's pledge, my young, fair Friend,
Nor thou the gift refuse ;
Nor with unwilling ear attend
The moralising Muse.

Since thou in all thy youth and charms
Must bid the world adieu
(A world 'gainst peace in constant arms),
To join the friendly few ;

Since, thy gay morn of life o'ercast,
Chill came the tempest's lour
(And ne'er Misfortune's eastern blast
Did nip a fairer flower) ;

Since life's gay scenes must charin no more :
Still much is left behind,
Still nobler wealth hast thou in store—
The comforts of the mind !

Thine is the self-approving glow
Of conscious honor's part ;
And (dearest gift of Heaven below)
Thine Friendship's truest heart ;

The joys refined of sense and taste,
With every Muse to rove :
And doubly were the Poet blest,
These joys could he improve.

ESTEEM FOR CHLORIS.

Ah, Chloris, since it may not be
That thou of love wilt hear ;
If from the lover thou maun flee,
Yet let the friend be dear.

Altho' I love my Chloris mair
Than ever tongue could tell ;
My passion I will ne'er declare—
I'll say I wish thee well.

Tho' a' my daily care thou art
And a' my nightly dream,
I'll hide the struggle in my heart,
And say it is esteem.

The subsequent history of Chloris is pitiful. Some years after this outpouring of poetry in her praise, her father failed in business. The enthusiastic friend who had sung her praise was laid in Dumfries churchyard. She received no money from her husband, and scarcely knew in what part of the world he lived. She was, therefore, compelled to become a governess in a gentleman's family; and in situations of this kind passed some years of her life. In 1816, returning from a visit to a brother in Sunderland, she inquired at Brampton for her husband, and learned that she had only missed seeing him by a few hours, as he had that day been in the village. He was now squandering a fourth or fifth fortune, which had been left to him by a relative. Not long after, learning that he was imprisoned for debt at Carlisle, she went to see him. Having written to ask for an interview, she went to the place where he was confined, and was desired to walk in. His lodging was pointed out to her on the opposite side of a quadrangle, round which there was a covered walk resembling the ambulatories of the ancient religious houses. As she walked along one side of this court, she passed a bulky-looking man, slightly paralytic, who shuffled in walking, as from lameness. As she approached the door, she heard this man pronounce her name. 'Jean!' he said, and then immediately added 'Mrs Whelpdale!' It was her

husband — the 'gay' young fellow of 1793 transformed into a broken-down, middle-aged man, whom she had passed without even suspecting his identity. The wife had to ask the wreck if he was her husband, and the wreck answered that he was. There was a sort of reconciliation. Jean spent a month in Carlisle, calling upon her husband every day, and then returned to Scotland. Some months afterwards, when he had been liberated, she paid him another visit; but his utter inability to make a prudent use of any money entrusted to him rendered it quite impossible that they should renew their conjugal life. She never saw him again.

It has been said that this poor, unprotected woman was at length led into an error which lost her the respect of her friends. She is stated to have spent some time in a kind of vagrant life, verging on mendicancy, and never rising above the condition of a domestic servant.* About the year 1825, a gentleman, to whom she had made her poverty known, bestirred himself in her behalf, and told her sad case in the newspapers in the hope of raising a subscription for her relief. His wife, having sent her some newspapers containing the paragraphs which he had written, received the following note :—

'Burns's Chloris is infinitely obliged to Mrs — for her kind attention in sending the newspapers, and feels pleased and flattered by having so much said and done in her behalf.

Ruth was kindly and generously treated by Boaz; perhaps Burns's Chloris may enjoy a similar fate in the fields of men of talent and worth.

March 2, 1825.

This lady saw Mrs Whelpdale several times, and was pleased with her conversation, which indicated a gift of humour and native acuteness of understanding. Chloris afterwards obtained a situation as housekeeper to a gentleman in Newington, and lived there

* As the story of Chloris's 'fall' has been denied, and as the biographers of Burns who have alluded to it have been severely censured for doing so, it has become imperative to give an extract from a letter written on 15th February 1851 to Dr Robert Chambers by Mr Thomas Thorburn, W.S., Edinburgh, and well known as a contributor to Wood's *Songs of Scotland*. Mr Thorburn, who during the later years of his life occupied John Syme's villa of Ryedale, and died on 30th June 1872, writes thus: 'I fell in with Chloris one evening on the Mound in Edinburgh in 1816 or 17, when I was serving an apprenticeship to a W.S. She made some amatory proposals which I declined, but I gave her a shilling, believing her to be an impostor. Our head clerk, however, met her some evenings afterwards, and adjourned to Johnnie Dowie's and discussed a bottle of ale, and by dint of cross-questioning discovered she was the veritable Jean. I regretted afterwards I had not a jaw with her.'

for some time in the enjoyment, she said, of greater comfort than she had known since she first left her father's house. But a severe pulmonary affection gradually undermined her health, and she was ultimately obliged to retire to a lodging in Middleton's Entry, Potterrow, near the place where Burns first met Clarinda. Here, known now as Mrs Lorimer, she lingered for some time in great suffering, being chiefly supported by her last master; and here, in September 1831, she died at the age of fifty-six. She was buried in Newington cemetery. Her husband, who latterly lived at Langholm, in Dumfriesshire, on a small pension, survived her three or four years.*

TO MR PETER HILL.

[DUMFRIES, *end of October 1794?*]

MY DEAR HILL—By a carrier of yesterday, Henry Osborn by name, I sent you a kippered [smoked] salmon, which I trust you will duly receive, and which I also trust will give you many a toothful of satisfaction. If you have the confidence to say that there is anything of the kind in all your great city superior to this in true kipper relish and flavour, I will be revenged by—not sending you another next season. In return, the first party of friends that dine with you—provided that your fellow travellers and my trusty and well beloved veterans in intimacy, Messrs Ramsay and Cameron,† be of the party—about that time in the afternoon when a relish or devil becomes grateful, give them two or three slices of the kipper and drink a bumper to your friends in Dumfries. Moreover, by last Saturday's Fly, I sent you a hare, which I hope came, and carriage free, safe to your hospitable mansion and social table. So much for business.

How do you like the following pastoral which I wrote the other day, for a tune that I daresay you well know?

['Ca' the Yowes to the Knowes.'—See pp. 139, 140.]

And how do you like the following?—

* See *Burns's Chloris, a Reminiscence*, by James Adams, M.D., for some very interesting recollections of Chloris and a generous defence of her reputation. Dr Adams explains that Chloris was a patient of his father, Dr Alexander Maxwell Adams, of St Patrick Square, Edinburgh, and relates how he visited her on his father's behalf to receive a packet of papers. When questioned by his son as to the alleged vagrant life and poverty of Chloris and the 'error' into which she is stated to have fallen, Dr Alexander Adams answered quickly, and almost with angry earnestness, 'Not at all; nothing of the kind; these are ungenerous aspersions on the good name of an unhappy and much misunderstood lady, originating no doubt in entire ignorance. Contradict them whenever you hear them.'

† Ramsay was printer of the *Edinburgh Evening Courant*. Cameron was a paper-manufacturer. These two gentlemen seem to have been recently at Dumfries, along with Hill, on which occasion there would of course be a meeting with Burns.

ON SEEING MRS KEMBLE IN YARICO.

Kemble, thou cur'st my unbelief
 Of Moses and his rod :
 At Yarico's sweet notes of grief
 The rock with tears had flow'd.*

Or this?—

ON W[ALTER] R[IDDEL], ESQ.

So vile was poor Wat, such a miscreant slave,
 That the worms ev'n damn'd him when laid in his grave.
 'In his skull there 's a famine' a starved reptile cries ;
 'And his heart, it is poison' another replies.

My best good wishes to Mrs Hill; and believe me to be, ever
 yours, R. BURNS.†

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 27th October 1794.

I am sensible, my dear friend, that a genuine poet can no more exist without his mistress than his meat. I wish I knew the adorable she whose bright eyes and witching smiles have so often enraptured the Scottish bard, that I might drink her sweet health when the toast is going round. 'Craigieburn Wood' must certainly be adopted into my family, since she is the subject of the song; but in the name of decency, I must beg a new chorus-verse from you. 'O to be lying beyond thee, dearie' is perhaps a consummation to be wished, but will not do for singing in the company of ladies. The songs in your last will do you lasting credit, and suit the respective airs charmingly. I am perfectly of your opinion with respect to the additional airs. The idea of sending them into the world naked as they were born was ungenerous. They must all be clothed and made decent by our friend Clarke.

* 'On Friday last, our theatre received a great acquisition in the favourite opera of "Inkle and Yarico" [by George Coleman, on a story from the *Spectator*] by the first appearance of Mrs Kemble, in the amiable and interesting character of Yarico. Her excellent performance of that character has been the subject of high panegyric. We can only join our tribute to her established reputation, by observing that her delineations were striking, natural, and affecting, and commanded the attention and applause of an elegant audience. The farce was "Animal Magnetism," &c.—*Dumfries Journal*, Oct. 21, 1794. The actress in question was the wife of Stephen Kemble, a senior brother in a family which has given at least three distinguished ornaments to the British stage. S. Kemble composed a song on the occasion of the death of Burns.

† This letter appeared in the *Knickerbocker* (New York Magazine) for September 1848. On another MS. of the epigram on Mrs Kemble, it appears that the performance of 'Inkle and Yarico' which Burns witnessed took place on the 24th of October 1794.

I find I am anticipated by the friendly Cunningham in sending you Ritson's Scottish collection. Permit me, therefore, to present you with his English collection, which you will receive by the coach. I do not find his historical essay on Scottish song interesting. Your anecdotes and miscellaneous remarks will, I am sure, be much more so. Allan has just sketched a charming design from 'Maggie Lauder.' She is dancing with such spirit as to electrify the piper, who seems almost dancing too, while he is playing with the most exquisite glee. I am much inclined to get a small copy, and to have it engraved in the style of Ritson's prints.

P.S.—What do your anecdotes say concerning 'Maggie Lauder?' was she a real personage, and of what rank? You would surely speer for her, if you ca'd at Anster town.
G. T.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

Nov. 1794.

Many thanks to you, my dear Sir, for your present: it is a book of the utmost importance to me. I have, yesterday, begun my anecdotes, &c. for your work. I intend drawing it up in the form of a letter to you, which will save me from the tedious, dull business of systematic arrangement. Indeed, as all I have to say is unconnected remarks, anecdotes, scraps of old songs, &c. it will be impossible to give the work a beginning, a middle and an end, which the critics insist to be absolutely necessary in a work. As soon as I have a few pages in order, I will send you them as a specimen. I only fear that the matter will grow so large among my hands as to be more expense than you can allot for it. Now for my desultory way of writing you.

I am happy that I have at last pleased you with verses to your right-hand tune 'Cauld Kail:' I see a little unpliance in the line you object to, but cannot alter it for a better. It is one thing to know one's error, and another and much more difficult affair to amend that error.

In my last, I told you my objections to the song you had selected for 'My lodging is on the cold ground.' On my visit the other day to my fair Chloris (that is the poetic name of the lovely goddess of my inspiration) she suggested an idea, which I, on my return from the visit, wrought into the following song. It is exactly in the measure of 'My dearie an thou die,' which you say is the precise rhythm of the air:—

MY CHLORIS, MARK HOW GREEN THE GROVES.

TUNE—*My Lodging is on the cold Ground.*

My Chloris, mark how green the groves,
The primrose-banks how fair;
The balmy gales awake the flowers
And wave thy flaxen hair.

The lavrock shuns the palace gay, lark
 And o'er the cottage sings :
 For nature smiles as sweet, I ween,
 To Shepherds as to Kings.

Let minstrels sweep the skilfu' string,
 In lordly, lighted ha' : hall
 The Shepherd stops his simple reed,
 Blithe, in the birken shaw. Gay—birch wood

The princely revel may survey
 Our rustic dance wi' scorn :
 But are their hearts as light as ours
 Beneath the milk-white thorn ?

The Shepherd, in the flowery glen,
 In Shepherd's phrase will woo :
 The Courtier tells a finer tale,
 But is his heart as true ?

These wild-wood flowers I've pu'd, to deck pulled
 That spotless breast o' thine,
 The Courtier's gems may witness love—
 But 'tis na love like mine.

How do you like the simplicity and tenderness of this pastoral? I think it pretty well.

I like you for entering so candidly and so kindly into the story of *ma chère amie*. I assure you, I was never more in earnest in my life, than in the account of that affair which I sent you in my last. Conjugal love is a passion which I deeply feel, and highly venerate; but somehow it does not make such a figure in poesy as that other species of the passion,

Where Love is liberty, and Nature law.

Musically speaking, the first is an instrument of which the gamut is scanty and confined, but the tones inexpressibly sweet; while the last has powers equal to all the intellectual Modulation of the Human Soul. Still, I am a very Poet in my enthusiasm of the passion. The welfare and happiness of the beloved object is the *first* and *inviolable* sentiment that pervades my soul; and whatever pleasures I might wish for, or whatever might be the raptures they would give me, yet, if they interfere and

clash with that *first* principle, it is having these pleasures at a dishonest price; and Justice forbids, and Generosity disdains the purchase! As to the herd of the sex who are good for little or nothing else, I have made no such agreement with myself; but where the Parties are capable of, and the Passion is, the true Divinity of love—the man who can act otherwise than I have laid down is a Villain!

[The poet here leaves a small space at the bottom of a page, and at the top of the next goes on: ‘It was impossible, you know, to take up the subject of your songs in the last sheet: that would have been a falling off indeed!’]

Despairing of my own powers to give you variety enough in English songs, I have been turning over old Collections, to pick out songs of which the measure is something similar to what I want, and with a little alteration so as to suit the rhythm of the air exactly, to give you them for your Work. Where the songs have hitherto been but little noticed, nor have ever been set to music, I think the shift a fair one. A song, which, under the same first verse of the first stanza, you will find in Ramsay’s *Tea-table Miscellany*, and elsewhere, I have cut down for an English dress to your ‘*Daintie Davie*,’ as follows:—

SONG,

ALTERED FROM AN OLD ENGLISH ONE.

IT WAS THE CHARMING MONTH OF MAY.

TUNE—*Daintie Davie*.

It was the charming month of May,
 When all the flowers were fresh and gay,
 One morning by the break of day,
 The youthful, charming Chloe
 From peaceful slumber she arose,
 Girt on her mantle and her hose,
 And o’er the flowery mead she goes,
 The youthful, charming Chloe.

Chorus—Lovely was she by the dawn,
 Youthful Chloe, charming Chloe,
 Tripping o’er the pearly lawn,
 The youthful, charming Chloe.

The feather’d people, you might see
 Perch’d all around on every tree,
 In notes of sweetest melody
 They hail the charming Chloe;

Till, painting gay the eastern skies,
 The glorious sun began to rise ;
 Out-rivall'd by the radiant eyes
 Of youthful, charming Chloe.

You may think meanly of this ; but take a look at the bombast original,* and you will be surprised that I have made so much of it.

I have finished my song to 'Rothemurche's Rant' and you have Clarke to consult, as to the set of the air for singing.

LASSIE WI' THE LINT-WHITE LOCKS.†

TUNE—*Rothemurche's Rant.*

Now nature cleeds the flowery lea,	clothes
And a' is young and sweet like thee ;	all
O wilt thou share its joys wi' me,	
And say thou 'lt be my Dearie O ?	

<i>Chorus</i> —Lassie wi' the lint-white locks,	
Bonie lassie, artless lassie,	
Wilt thou wi' me tent the flocks,	herd
Wilt thou be my Dearie O ?	

The primrose bank, the wimpling burn,
 The cuckoo on the milk-white thorn,
 The wanton lambs at early morn
 Shall welcome thee, my Dearie O.‡

And when the welcome simmer-shower	
Has chear'd ilk drooping little flower,	every
We 'll to the breathing woodbine bower	
At sultry noon, my Dearie O.	

* One verse of the 'bombast original' may be given :

Kind Phœbus now began to arise
 And paint with red the eastern skies ;
 Struck with the glory of her eyes,
 He shrinks behind a cloud.
 Her mantle on a bough she lays,
 She left all nature in amaze,
 And skipped into the wood.

† Dr James Adams, who saw Chloris when she was upwards of fifty, says : ' Her countenance has been in frequent varied phraseology described as bewitchingly lovely. To me it was only very pleasing. Her hair, abundant, was of what I should at the present time indicate as of a pale straw, yellowish lemon colour, of glossy sheen.'

‡ This verse is not in the Thomson MS.

When Cynthia lights, wi' silver ray,
 The weary shearer's hameward way,
 Thro' yellow waving fields we'll stray,
 And talk o' love, my Dearie O.

And when the howling wintry blast
 Disturbs my Lassie's midnight rest ;
 Enclaspèd to my faithfu' breast,
 I'll comfort thee, my Dearie O.

This piece has at least the merit of being a regular Pastoral : the vernal morn, the summer noon, the autumnal evening and the winter night, are regularly rounded. If you like it, well : if not, I will insert it in the *Museum*.

I am out of temper that you should set so sweet, so tender an air, as 'Deil tak the war,' to the foolish old verses. You talk of the silliness of 'Saw ye my father : ' by Heavens, the odds is Gold to Brass. Besides, the old song, though now pretty well modernized into the Scottish language, is originally, and in the early editions, a bungling, low imitation of the Scotch manner, by that genius, Tom D'Urfey so has no pretensions to be a Scotch production. There is a pretty English song, by Sheridan, in *The Duenna*, to this air ; which is out of sight superior to D'Urfey. It begins—

When sable night, each drooping plant restoring.

The air, if I understand the expression of it properly, is the very native language of Simplicity, Tenderness and Love. I have again gone over my song to the tune, as follows.

[Here Burns transcribes his new version of 'Sleep'st thou or Wak'st thou?' containing the slight variations which have already been given.]

I could easily throw this into an English mould ; but to my taste, in the simple and tender of the Pastoral song, a sprinkling of the old Scotch, has an inimitable effect. You know, I never encroach on your privileges as an Editor. You may reject my song altogether, and keep by the old one ; or you may give mine, as a second Scots one ; or, lastly, you may set the air to my verses, still giving the old song as a second, one, and as being well known ; in which last case, I would find you, in English verses of my own, a song, the exact rhythm of my Scotch one. If you keep by the old words, Sheridan's song will do for an English one. I once more conjure you, to have no manner of false delicacy in accepting, or refusing my compositions, either in this, or any other of your songs.

Now for my English song to 'Nansie's to the greenwood gane.'

FAREWELL, THOU STREAM THAT WINDING FLOWS.

Farewell, thou stream that winding flows
 Around Eliza's dwelling ;
 O mem'ry, spare the cruel throes
 Within my bosom swelling :
 Condemn'd to drag a hopeless chain,
 And yet in secret languish ;
 To feel a fire in every vein,
 Nor dare disclose my anguish.

Love's veriest wretch, unseen, unknown,
 I fain my griefs would cover ;
 The bursting sigh, th' unweeting groan, unwitting
 Betray the hapless lover :
 I know thou doom'st me to despair,
 Nor wilt, nor canst, relieve me ;
 But, Oh Eliza, hear one prayer,
 For pity's sake, forgive me !

The music of thy voice I heard,
 Nor wist while it enslav'd me ;
 I saw thine eyes, yet nothing fear'd,
 Till fears no more had sav'd me :
 Th' unwary sailor thus, aghast,
 The wheeling torrent viewing,
 Mid circling horrors sinks at last
 In overwhelming ruin.

[It will be observed that this is a new and improved version of the song sent in April of the preceding year, beginning, 'The last time I came o'er the Moor.' The most remarkable change is the substitution of Eliza for Maria, due doubtless to the alienation of Mrs Riddel, and Burns's resentment against her.]

'Young Jockey was the blythest lad.'—My English song, 'Here is the glen, and here the bower,' cannot go to this air. However, the measure is so common, that you may have your choice of five hundred English songs. Do you know the air 'Lumps o' Puddings?' It is a favorite of mine, and I think would be worth a place among your additional songs, as soon as several in your list. It is in a measure, in which you will find songs

enow to chuse on ; but if you were to adopt it, I would take it in my own hand.

There is an air—‘The Caledonian hunt’s delight,’ to which I wrote a song that you will find in *Johnson*—‘Ye banks and braes o’ bonie Doon ;’ this air, I think, might find a place among your hundred, as Lear says of his knights. To make room for it, you may take out (to my taste) either ‘Young Jockey was the blythest lad,’ or ‘There’s nae luck about the house,’ or ‘The collier’s bonie lassie,’ or ‘The tither morn,’ or the ‘The sow’s tail ;’ and put into your additional list. Not but that these songs have great merit ; but still they have not the pathos of ‘The banks o’ Doon.’ Do you know the history of the air ? It is curious enough. A good many years ago, Mr James Miller,* writer in your good town, a gentleman whom possibly you know, was in company with our friend Clarke, and talking of Scots music, Miller expressed an ardent ambition to be able to compose a Scots air. Mr Clarke, partly by way of joke, told him to keep to the black keys of the harpsichord, and preserve some kind of rhythm, and he would infallibly compose a Scots air. Certain it is that in a few days, Mr Miller produced the rudiments of an air, which Mr Clarke, with a few touches and corrections, fashioned into the tune in question.† Ritson, you know, has the same story of the black keys ; but this account which I have just given you, Mr Clarke informed me of several years ago. Now, to shew you how difficult it is to trace the origin of our airs, I have heard it repeatedly asserted that it was an Irish air ; nay, I met with an Irish gentleman who affirmed he had heard it in Ireland among the old women ; while, on the other hand, a lady of fashion, no less than a countess, informed me that the first person who introduced the air into this country was a baronet’s lady of her acquaintance, who took down the notes from an itinerant piper in the Isle of Man. How difficult, then, to ascertain the truth respecting our Poesy and Music ! I myself have lately seen a couple of Ballads sung through the streets of Dumfries, with my name at the head of them as the author, though it was the first time ever I had seen them.

I thank you for admitting ‘Craigieburn-wood,’ and I shall take care to furnish you with a new chorus. In fact, the chorus was not my work, but part of some old verses to the air. If I can catch myself in a more than ordinary propitious moment, I shall write a new ‘Craigieburn-wood’ altogether. My heart is much in the theme.

I am ashamed, my dear Fellow, to make the request—’tis dunning your generosity ; but in a moment when I had forgot whether I was rich or poor, I promised Chloris a copy of your songs. It wrings my honest pride to write you this ; but an ungracious request is doubly so by a

* Mr Miller served for many years as clerk in the Teind Office, Edinburgh.

† Miller’s tune seems to have been little more than a reminiscence of ‘Lost is my quiet for ever’ in Playford ‘Apollo’s Banquet,’ 1690. For the words and music of the English original, reference may be made to the appendix of *The Popular Songs and Melodies of Scotland*, with notes by G. F. Graham (Muir Wood, Glasgow, 1891).

tedious apology. To make you amends, as soon as I have extracted the necessary information out of them, I will return you Ritson's volumes.

The Lady is not a little prond that she is to make so distinguished a figure in your Collection, and I am not a little proud that I have it in my power to please her so much.

On second thoughts, I send you Clarke's singing set of *Rothemurche*, which please return me in your first letter—I know it will not suit you.

I have no more post-paper, and it is too late to go to the shop; so you must e'en take an envelope of Excise-paper. Lucky it is for your patience that my paper is done, for when I am in a scribbling humor, I know [not] when to give over. Adieu!

R. BURNS.

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

15th November 1794.

MY GOOD SIR—Since receiving your last, I have had another interview with Mr Clarke, and a long consultation. He thinks the '*Caledonian Hunt*' is more bacchanalian than amorous in its nature, and recommends it to you to match the air accordingly. Pray, did it ever occur to you how peculiarly well the Scottish airs are adapted for verses in the form of a dialogue? The first part of the air is generally low, and suited for a man's voice; and the second part, in many instances, cannot be sung at concert-pitch but by a female voice. A song thus performed makes an agreeable variety, but few of ours are written in this form: I wish you would think of it in some of those that remain. The only one of the kind you have sent is admirable, and will be a universal favourite.

Your verses for '*Rothemurche*' are so sweetly pastoral, and your serenade to *Chloris*, for '*Deil tak the wars*,' so passionately tender, that I have sung myself into raptures with them. Your song for '*My Lodging is on the cold ground*,' is likewise a diamond of the first water; I am quite dazzled and delighted by it. Some of your *Chlorises*, I suppose, have flaxen hair, from your partiality for this colour—else we differ about it; for I could scarcely conceive a woman to be a beauty, on reading that she had lint-white locks.

'Farewell, thou Stream that winding flows,' I think excellent, but it is much too serious to come after '*Nancy*'—at least, it would seem an incongruity to provide the same air with merry Scottish and melancholy English verses! The more that the two sets of verses resemble each other in their general character, the better. Those you have manufactured for '*Dainty Davie*' will answer charmingly. I am happy to find you have begun your anecdotes: I care not how long they be, for it is impossible that any thing from your pen can be tedious. Let me beseech you not to use ceremony in telling me when you wish to present any of your friends with the songs; the next carrier will bring you three copies, and you are as welcome to twenty as to a pinch of snuff.

G. T.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

19th November 1794.

You see, my dear Sir, what a punctual correspondent I am ; though indeed you may thank yourself for the tedium of my letters, as you have so flattered me on my horsemanship with my favorite Hobby, and have praised the grace of his ambling so much, that I am scarcely off his back. For instance, this morning, though a keen blowing frost, in my walk before breakfast I finished my Duet, which you were pleased to praise so much. Whether I have uniformly succeeded, I will not say ; but there it is to you, though it is not an hour old—

PHILLY AND WILLY.

TUNE—*The Sow's Tail.*

HE.

O Philly, happy be that day
When roving through the gather'd hay,
My youthfu' heart was stown away,
And by thy charms, my Philly.

SHE.

O Willy, ay I bless the grove
Where first I owned my maiden love,
Whilst thou did pledge the Powers above
To be my ain dear Willy.

HE.

As songsters of the early year
Are ilka day mair sweet to hear,
So ilka day to me mair dear
And charming is my Philly.

every—more

SHE.

As on the brier the budding rose
Still richer breathes and fairer blows,
So in my tender bosom grows
The love I bear my Willy.

HE.

The milder sun and bluer sky,
 That crown my harvest cares wi' joy,
 Were ne'er sae welcome to my eye
 As is a sight o' Philly.

SHE.

The little swallow's wanton wing,
 Tho' wafting o'er the flowery spring,
 Did ne'er to me sic tidings bring,
 As meeting o' my Willy.

HE.

The bee that thro' the sunny hour
 Sips nectar in the opening flower,
 Compar'd wi' my delight is poor,
 Upon the lips o' Philly.

SHE.

The woodbine in the dewy weat
 When evening shades in silence meet,
 Is nocht sae fragrant or sae sweet
 As is a kiss o' Willy.

HE.

Let Fortune's wheel at random run,
 And Fools may tyne, and Knaves may win ; lose
 My thoughts are a' bound up on ane, one
 And that 's my ain dear Philly.

SHE.

What 's a' the joys that gowd can gie ? gold—give
 I care na wealth a single flie ; fly
 The lad I love 's the lad for me,
 And that 's my ain dear Willy.

Tell me honestly how you like it, and point out whatever you think faulty.

I am much pleased with your idea of singing our songs in alternate stanzas, and regret that you did not hint it to me sooner. In those that remain, I shall have it in my eye. I remember your objections to the name Philly, but it is the common abbreviation of Phillis, which is a common Christian name. Sally, the only name that suits, has, to my ear, a vulgarity about it which unfits it for any thing except burlesque. The legion of Scottish Poetasters of the day, whom your brother Editor, Mr Ritson, ranks with me as my coevals, have always mistaken vulgarity for simplicity ; whereas simplicity is as much éloignée from vulgarity on the one hand, as from affected point and puerile conceit on the other.

I agree with you as to the air 'Craigieburnwood,' that a chorus would in some degree spoil the effect, and shall certainly have none in my projected song to it. It is not, however, a case in point with 'Rothe-murehe : ' there, as in 'Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch,' a chorus, to my taste, goes well enough. As to the chorus going first, you know it is so with 'Roy's Wife' also.' In fact, in the first part of both tunes, the rhythm is so peculiar and irregular, and on that irregularity depends so much of their beauty, that we must e'en take them with all their wildness, and humour the verse accordingly. Leaving out the starting-note in both tunes has, I think, an effect that no regularity could counterbalance the want of.

O Roy's wife of Aldivalloch.

O Lassie wi' the lintwhite locks.

And compare with

Roy's wife of Aldivalloch.

Lassie wi' the lintwhite locks.

Does not the tameness of the prefixed syllable strike you? In the last case, with the true fervor of genius, you strike at once into the wild originality of the air ; whereas, in the first insipid business, it is like the grating screw of the pins before the fiddle is brought in tune. This is my taste ; if I am wrong, I beg pardon of the *Cognoscenti*.

I am also of your mind as to the 'Caledonian hunt ; ' but to fit it with verses to suit these dotted crotchets will be a task indeed. I differ from you as to the expression of the air. It is so charming, that it would make any subject in a song go down ; but pathos is certainly its native tongue. Scots Bacchanalians we certainly want, though the few that we have are excellent. For instance 'Todlin hame' is, for wit and humour, an unparalleled composition ; and 'Andrew and his cutty gun' is the work of a master. By the way, are you not quite vexed to think that these men of genius, for such they certainly were, who composed our fine Scottish lyrics, should be unknown ? * It has given me many a

* What has been so beautifully said of the words of our songs (*History and Poetry of the Scottish Border*, by Professor Veitch) may be here quoted as equally applicable to the tunes : 'The form in which we have them must be held as representing the changes and additions, the suggestions and passing touches of many generations, the continuous expression of the national heart rather than individual production.'—The late J. Muir Wood, in Grove's *Dictionary of Music*.

heartache. Apropos to Bacchanalian songs in Scottish, I composed one yesterday, for an air I like much—‘Lumps o’ puddings.’

CONTENTED WI’ LITTLE.

TUNE—*Lumps o’ Pudding.*

Contented wi’ little, and cantie wi’ mair,	merry
Whene’er I forgather wi’ Sorrow and Care,	meet
I gi’e them a skelp, as they’re creeping alang,	slap
Wi’ a cog o’ gude swats, and an auld Scottish sang.	cup—ale

I whyles claw the elbow o’ troublesome thought ;	scratch
But man is a soger, and Life is a faught :	struggle
My mirth and good humour are coin in my pouch,	pocket
And my FREEDOM’s my lairdship nae monarch dare touch.	

A towmond o’ trouble, should that be my fa’,	twelvemonth—fate
A night o’ gude fellowship sowthers it a’	solders
When at the blythe end of our journey at last,	
Wha the de’il ever thinks o’ the road he has past.	

Blind chance, let her snapper and stoyte on her way ;	stumble
Be’t to me, be’t frae me, e’en let the jade gae :	—totter
Come Ease, or come Travail, come Pleasure or Pain ;	go
My warst word is : ‘Welcome and welcome again !’	

If you do not relish the air, I will send it to Johnson.

The two songs you saw in Clarke’s are neither of them worth your attention. The words of ‘Auld Lang Syne’ are good, but the music is an old air, the rudiments of the modern tune of that name. The other tune you may hear as a common Scottish country dance.

20th Nov.—Since yesterday’s penmanship I have framed a couple of English stanzas, by way of an English song to ‘Roy’s Wife.’ You will allow me that in this instance my English corresponds in sentiment with the Scottish,

CANST THOU LEAVE ME THUS, MY KATY?

TUNE—*Roy’s Wife.*

Chorus—Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
 Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
 Well thou know’st my aching heart,
 And canst thou leave me thus for pity?

Is this thy plighted, fond regard,
 Thus cruelly to part, my Katy :
 Is this thy faithful swain's reward—
 An aching broken heart, my Katy.

Farewel ! and ne'er such sorrows tear
 That fickle heart of thine, my Katy !
 Thou may'st find those will love thee dear —
 But not a love like mine, my Katy.

Well ! I think this, to be done in two or three turns across my room, and with two or three pinches of Irish blackguard, is not so far amiss. You see I am determined to have my quantum of applause from somebody.

Now for 'When she cam ben she bobbit.'

[Burns then repeats the song, 'Oh, saw ye my dear, my Phely?' but with the names Mary and Harry instead of Phely and Willy.]

I think these names will answer better than the former, and the rhythm of the song is as you desired.

I dislike your proposed alterations in two instances. 'Logie o' Buchan,' and 'There's my thumb, I'll ne'er beguile thee,' are certainly fittest for your additional songs; and in their place, as two of the hundred, I would put the most beautiful airs—'Whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad'—at all rates, as one. It is surely highly capable of feeling and sentiment, and the song is one of my best. For the other, keep your favourite 'Muirland Willie,' and with it close your hundred. As to the first being Irish, all that you can say is, that it has a twang of the Irish manner; but to infer from that, that *of course* it must be an Irish production, is unfair. In the neighbourhood and intercourse of the Scots and Irish—and both musical nations too—it is highly probable that composers of one nation would sometimes imitate, or emulate the manner of the other. I never met with an Irishman who claimed this air: a pretty strong proof that it is Scotch. Just the same is the case with 'Gramachree;' if it be really Irish, it is decidedly in the Scottish taste. That other air in your Collection, 'Oran Goail,' which you think is Irish, that nation claim as theirs by the name of 'Caun du delish;' but look into Gow's Publication of Scottish songs, and you will find it as a Gaelic song, with the words in that language, a wretched translation of which original words is set to the tune in the *Museum*. Your worthy Gaelic priest gave me that translation, and at his table I heard both the original and the translation sung by a pretty large party of Highland gentlemen, all of whom had no other idea of the air than that it was a native of their own country.

I am obliged to you for your goodness in your three copies, but will certainly return you two of them. Why should I take money out of your pocket?

Tell my friend Allen (for I am sure that we only want the trifling circumstance of being known to one another to be the best friends on earth) that I much suspect he has in his plates mistaken the figure of the stock and horn. I have *at last* gotten one, but it is a very rude instrument. It is composed of three parts: the stock, which is the hinder thigh-bone of a sheep, such as you see in a mutton ham; the horn, which is a common Highland cow's horn, cut off at the smaller end untill the aperture be large enough to admit the 'stock' to be pushed up through the horn untill it be held by the thicker end of the thigh bone; and lastly, an oaten reed, exactly cut and notched like that which you see every shepherd boy have when the corn-stems are green and full grown. The reed is not made fast in the bone, but is held by the lips, and plays loose in the smaller end of the 'stock,' while the stock and horn hanging on its larger end is held by the hands in playing. The 'stock' has six or seven ventiges on the upper side, and one back-ventige, like the common flute. This of mine was made by a man from the braes of Athole, and is exactly what the shepherds wont to use in that country.

However, either it is not quite properly bored in the holes, or else we have not the art of blowing it rightly, for we can make little of it. If Mr Allen chuses I will send him a sight of mine, as I look on myself to be a kind of brother-brush with him. 'Pride in poets is nae sin;' and I will say it that I look on Mr Allen and Mr Burns to be the only genuine and real painters of Scotch costume in the world. Farewel!

R. BURNS.

This song of 'Contented wi' Little, and Canty wi' Mair,' was intended by the poet to present a 'picture of his mind.' So he told Thomson in a subsequent letter, written May 1795. He regarded himself, then, as a soldier in the field of life, for whom it was as useless, as for actual soldiers on duty, to indulge in melancholy complaints. He sometimes could not help yielding for a time to dejection; but the merry song and the flowing bowl were a specific to 'cure all again.' A single night of good-fellowship atoned for a twelvemonth of vexation. His liberty and his good-humour were solid possessions of which he could not be deprived. His compensation for a dreary reach in the path of existence was that he forgot it when it was passed. In his 'philosophy' lay his great resource. As to the varying fortune brought to his door by the tide of chance, he felt much as one who was in some degree his poetical prototype had felt:

'Fortune that, with malicious joy,
 Does man, her slave, oppress,
 Proud of her office to destroy,
 Is seldom pleased to bless :
 Still various and inconstant still,
 But with an inclination to be ill,
 Promotes, degrades, delights in strife,
 And makes a lottery of life.
 I can enjoy her when she's kind ;
 But when she dances in the wind,
 And shakes her wings, and will not stay,
 I puff the prostitute away.
 The little or the much she gave is quietly resigned :
 Content with poverty, my soul I arm ;
 And virtue, though in rags, will keep me warm.'*

The other song, 'Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?' which he produced in two or three turns through his little room, with the help of two or three pinches of Irish blackguard, is a poetical expression of the kindlier feeling he was now beginning to entertain towards Mrs Riddel. Burns could not write verses on any woman without imagining her as a mistress, past, present, or potential. He accordingly conceives their estrangement as due to her inconstancy in affection. He sent the song to Mrs Riddel, as a sort of olive-branch, and she received it in no unkindly spirit, and responded with song in the same strain, which Currie found amongst Burns's papers after his death :

STAY, MY WILLIE, YET BELIEVE ME.

Stay, my Willie—yet believe me ;
 Stay, my Willie—yet believe me ;
 For, ah ! thou know'st na' every pang
 Wad wring my bosom shouldst thou leave me.

Tell me that thou yet art true,
 And a' my wrongs shall be forgiven ;
 And when this heart proves fause to thee,
 Yon sun shall cease its course in heaven.

false

But to think I was betrayed,
 That falsehood e'er our loves should sunder !
 To take the flow'ret to my breast,
 And find the guilefu' serpent under.

* *Horace*, translated by Dryden.

Could I hope thou 'dst ne'er deceive,
 Celestial pleasures, might I choose 'em,
 I'd slight, nor seek in other spheres
 That heaven I'd find within thy bosom.

Stay, my Willie—yet believe me ;
 Stay, my Willie—yet believe me ;
 For, ah ! thou know'st na' every pang
 Wad wring my bosom shouldst thou leave me.

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

28th November 1794.

I acknowledge, my dear Sir, you are not only the most punctual, but the most delectable correspondent I ever met with. To attempt flattering you never entered into my head ; the truth is, I look back with surprise at my imprudence, in so frequently nibbling at lines and couplets of your incomparable lyrics, for which, perhaps, if you had served me right, you would have sent me to the devil. On the contrary, however, you have all along condescended to invite my criticism with so much courtesy, that it ceases to be wonderful if I have sometimes given myself the airs of a reviewer. Your last budget demands unqualified praise : all the songs are charming, but the Duet is a *chef-d'œuvre*. 'Lumps o' pudding' shall certainly make one of my family-dishes ; you have cooked it so capitally that it will please all palates. Do give us a few more of this cast when you find yourself in good spirits ; these convivial songs are more wanted than those of the amorous kind ; of which we have great choice, besides one does not often meet with a singer capable of giving the proper effect to the latter, while the former are easily sung, and acceptable to everybody. I participate in your regret that the authors of some of our best songs are unknown ; it is provoking to every admirer of genius.

I mean to have a picture painted from your beautiful ballad, 'The Soldier's Return,' to be engraved for one of my frontispieces. The most interesting point of time appears to me when she first recognises her 'ain dear Willy :'

She gazed, she reddened like a rose.

The three lines immediately following are no doubt more impressive on the reader's feelings ; but were the painter to fix on these, then you'll observe the animation and anxiety of her countenance is gone, and he could only represent her fainting in the soldier's arms. But I submit the matter to you, and beg your opinion.

Allan desires me to thank you for your accurate description of the stock and horn, and for the very gratifying compliment you pay him, in considering him worthy of standing in a niche by the side of Burns in

the Scottish Pantheon. He has seen the rude instrument you describe, so does not want you to send it; but wishes to know whether you believe it to have ever been generally used as a musical pipe by the Scottish Shepherds, and when, and in what part of the country chiefly. I doubt much if it was capable of anything but routing and roaring. A friend of mine says he remembers to have heard one in his younger days, made of wood instead of your bone, and that the sound was abominable.

Do not, I beseech you, return the books.

G. T.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[Post-mark Dec. 9], 1794.

MY DEAR SIR—It is, I assure you, the pride of my heart to do any thing to forward, or add to the value of your book; and as I agree with you that the Jacobite song in the *Museum* to ‘There’ll never be peace till Jamie comes hame,’ would not so well consort with Peter Pindar’s excellent love-song to that air, I have just framed for you the following:—

[The song here transcribed was one entitled ‘My Nanie’s awa,’ referring to Mrs M’Lehose’s absence in the West Indies. Though perhaps not completed till now, it has been printed in the third volume of this work, p. 308.]

How does this please you?

I have thought that a song in Ramsay’s Collection, beginning ‘Come fill me a bumper, my jolly brave boys,’ might do as an English song for ‘Todlin Hame.’ It might do thus:—

Come fill me a bumper, my jolly, brave boys,
Let’s have no more female impert’nence and noise;
I’ve tried the endearments and witchcraft of love,
And found them but nonsense and whimsies, by Jove.

Chorus—Truce with your love! no more of your love;
The bottle henceforth is my mistress, by Jove.

As to the point of time, for the Expression, in your proposed print from my ‘Soger’s Return,’ it must certainly be at ‘She gazed.’ The interesting dubiety and suspense taking possession of her countenance, and the gushing fondness, with a mixture of playfulness in his, strike me as things of which a Master will make a great deal. In great haste, but in great truth,—Yours,

R. B.

CHAPTER III.

DUMFRIES (JANUARY 1795—JANUARY 1796).

BURNS'S thoughts almost invariably turned at the close or the beginning of a year to Mrs Dunlop. This season was no exception to the rule ; but whether on account of his correspondent's being so far away, or because he had less to say than usual, the following letter or series of notes lay by him more than three weeks.

TO MRS DUNLOP,
IN LONDON.

DUMFRIES, 20th December 1794.*

I have been prodigiously disappointed in this London journey of yours. In the first place, when your last to me reached Dumfries, I was in the country and did not return until too late to answer your letter ; in the next place, I thought you would certainly take this route ; and now I know not what has become of you or whether this may reach you at all. God grant that it may find you and yours in prospering health and good spirits ! Do let me hear from you the soonest possible.

As I hope to get a frank from my friend Captain Miller, I shall, every leisure hour, take up the pen and gossip away whatever comes first, prose or poesy, sermon or song. In this last article I have abounded of late. I have often mentioned to you a superb publication of Scottish songs which is making its appearance in your great metropolis, and where I have the honor to preside over the Scottish verse, as no less a personage than Peter Pindar does over the English.

December 29th.

Since I began this letter, I have been appointed to act in the capacity of supervisor here, and I assure you, what with the load of business, and what with that business being new to me, I could scarcely have

* Purposely misplaced by Dr Currie under December 1795.

commanded ten minutes to have spoken to you, had you been in town, much less to have written you an epistle. This appointment is only temporary and during the illness of the present incumbent; but I look forward to an early period when I shall be appointed in full form: a consummation devoutly to be wished! My political sins seem to be forgiven me.

[1st January 1795.]

This is the season (New-year's day is now my date) of wishing; and mine are most fervently offered up for you! May life to you be a positive blessing while it lasts, for your own sake; and that it may yet be greatly prolonged, is my wish for my own sake and for the sake of the rest of your friends! What a transient business is life! Very lately I was a boy; but t'other day I was a young man; and I already begin to feel the rigid fibre and stiffening joints of old age coming fast o'er my frame. With all my follies of youth and I fear, a few vices of manhood, still I congratulate myself on having had in early days religion strongly imprinted on my mind. I have nothing to say to any one as to which sect he belongs to or what creed he believes; but I look on the man who is firmly persuaded of infinite wisdom and goodness superintending and directing every circumstance that can happen in his lot—I felicitate such a man as having a solid foundation for his mental enjoyment; a firm prop and sure stay in the hour of difficulty, trouble and distress; and a never-failing anchor of hope when he looks beyond the grave.

12th January 1795.

You will have seen our worthy and ingenious friend the Doctor [Dr Moore], long ere this. I hope he is well, and beg to be remembered to him. I have just been reading over again, I dare say for the hundred and fiftieth time, his *View of Society and Manners*; and still I read it with delight. His humour is perfectly original—it is neither the humour of Addison, nor Swift, nor Sterne, nor of any body but Dr Moore. By the bye, you have deprived me of *Zeluco*: remember *that*, when you are disposed to rake up the sins of my neglect from among the ashes of my laziness.

He has paid me a pretty compliment, by quoting me in his last publication.

R. B.

Burns learned to conduct vicarious courtships in his early days, and had not yet lost the art. Dr Robert Carruthers* told this story: 'In the neighbourhood of Dumfries, on the estate of Rockhall, some fifty years since, lived a worthy farmer whom Burns was in the habit of occasionally visiting. They had spent many a merry evening together, enriched with those sallies of wit and humour which stamped the poet's

* *Inverness Courier*, September 1840.

conversation with even more attraction and fascination than all the marvels of his poetry. The progress of their intercourse was varied by an event which must have afforded Burns no little amusement—the farmer fell in love. The lady was of respectable connections; and the farmer, though excellent at a song or anecdote, was unable for the task of writing a proper declaration of his passion. In this extremity, he called in the assistance of the poet. Burns furnished him with two drafts of a love-letter, and the drafts are certainly curiosities in their way. They are not quite so formal and grandiloquent in tone as the famous epistle which Tom Pipes in *Peregrine Pickle* procured from the village schoolmaster, which commenced, “Divine empress of my soul,” and implored the favourite fair one to “let the genial rays of her benevolence melt the icy emanations of disdain.” Burns’s letters, however, are of the same character. His prose style was always stiff and unnatural, being in this respect the antipodes of his verse, which flowed with such inimitable grace and simplicity. On the present occasion, too, he was writing in a feigned character, without the prompting of those genial impulses which made him so thriving a wooer himself. We believe the farmer was successful in his suit. Miss G—— listened to the passion so ardently proclaimed by proxy, and lived to be the happy wife of the farmer. We have no doubt that the worthy pair and the poet often laughed over this adventure during the few remaining years and evil days which darkened the close of the poet’s life.’

MADAM—What excuse to make for the liberty I am going to assume in this letter, I am utterly at a loss. If the most unfeigned respect for your accomplished worth—if the most ardent attachment—if sincerity and truth—if these, on my part, will in any degree weigh with you, my apology is these, and these alone. Little as I have had the pleasure of your acquaintance, it has been enough to convince me what enviable happiness must be his whom you shall honor with your particular regard, and more than enough to convince me how unworthy I am to offer myself a candidate for that partiality. In this kind of trembling hope, Madam, I intend very soon doing myself the honor of waiting on you, persuaded that however little Miss G—— may be disposed to attend to the suit of a lover as unworthy of her as I am, she is still too good to despise an honest man, whose only fault is loving her too much for his own peace. I have the honor to be, Madam, your most devoted humble servant.

DEAR MADAM—The passion of love had need to be productive of much delight; as where it takes thorough possession of the man it almost unfits him for anything else. The lover who is certain of an equal return of affection is surely the happiest of men; but he who is a prey to the horrors of anxiety and dreaded disappointment is a being whose situation is by no means enviable. Of this, my present experience gives me sufficient proof. To me, amusement seems impertinent and business intrusion, while you alone engross every faculty of my mind. May I request you to drop me a line, to inform me when I may wait on you? For pity's sake, do; and let me have it soon. In the meantime allow me, in all the artless sincerity of truth, to assure you that I truly am, my dearest Madam, your ardent lover and devoted humble servant.

Burns once held the pen for another, on an occasion of a totally different kind. According to Cromek: 'A neighbour of the poet's at Dumfries called on him and complained that he had been greatly disappointed in the irregular delivery of the paper of the *Morning Chronicle*. Burns asked: "Why do not you write to the editors of the paper?" "Good God! sir, can *I* presume to write to the learned editors of a newspaper?" "Well, if *you* are afraid of writing to the editors of a newspaper, *I* am not; and if you think proper, I'll draw up a sketch of a letter, which you may copy."

'Burns tore a leaf from his Excise-book, and instantly produced the sketch which I have transcribed, and which is here printed. The poor man thanked him and took the letter home. However, that caution which the watchfulness of his [Burns's] enemies had taught him to exercise, prompted him to the prudence of begging a friend to wait on the person for whom it was written and request the favour to have it returned. This request was complied with, and the paper never appeared in print.'

TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'MORNING CHRONICLE.'

[DUMFRIES, 1795.]

SIR—You will see by your subscribers' list that I have been about nine months one of that number.

I am sorry to inform you that in that time seven or eight of your papers either have never been sent me or else have never reached me. To be deprived of any one number of the first newspaper in Great Britain for information, ability and independence, is what I can ill brook and bear; but to be deprived of that most admirable oration of the Marquis of Lansdowne, when he made the great, though ineffectual, attempt (in the language of the poet, I fear too true,) 'to save a SINKING

STATE—this was a loss which I neither can nor will forgive you. That paper, Gentlemen, never reached me ; but I demand it of you. I am a BRITON ; and must be interested in the cause of LIBERTY : I am a MAN ; and the RIGHTS of HUMAN NATURE cannot be indifferent to me. However, do not let me mislead you : I am not a man in that situation of life, which, as your subscriber, can be of any consequence to you, in the eyes of those to whom SITUATION OF LIFE ALONE is the criterion of MAN. I am but a plain tradesman, in this distant, obscure country town : but that humble domicile in which I shelter my wife and children is the CASTELLUM of a BRITON ; and that scanty, hard-earned income which supports them is as truly my property as the most magnificent fortune of the most PUISSANT MEMBER of your HOUSE OF NOBLES.

These, gentlemen, are my sentiments ; and to them I subscribe my name ; and were I a man of ability and consequence enough to address the PUBLIC, with that name should they appear.—I am, &c.

The date of this letter may be confidently fixed as the commencement of 1795, as the speech to which it alludes could scarcely be any other than the remarkable oration against the continuance of the war, which the Marquis of Lansdowne delivered in the debate on the Address, 30th December 1794.

‘So Burns’s life flows on in this pleasant county town. His daily duties are stamping leather, gauging malt-vats, noting the manufacture of candles and granting licences for the transport of spirits. These duties he performs with fidelity to the king and not too much rigour towards the subject. As he goes about them in the forenoon, in his decent suit of dark clothes, perhaps holding his little boy Robert by the hand and talking to him about his school-exercises, he is looked upon by the general public with respect, as a person in some authority, the head of a family and also as a man of literary note ; and people are heard addressing him deferentially as *Mr Burns*. At a leisure hour before dinner, he will call at some house where there is a piano—such as Mr Newall, the writer’s—and there ask some young lady to run over for him one or two of his favourite Scotch airs, such as the “Sutor’s Daughter,” in order that he may accommodate to it some stanzas that have been humming through his brain for the last few days. For another half-hour, he will be seen standing at the head of some cross street with two or three young fellows, bankers’ clerks or “writer-chiels” commencing business, whom he is regaling with sallies of wit. Later in the day, he takes a solitary walk along the Dock Green by the

river-side, or to Lincluden, and composes the greater part of a new song; or he spends a couple of hours at his desk, between the fire and the window in his parlour, transcribing in his bold round hand the remarks which occur to him on Mr Thomson's last letter, together with some of his own recently composed songs. As a possible variation upon this routine, he has been seen passing along the old bridge of Devorgilla Balliol, about three o'clock, with his sword-cane in his hand, and his black beard unusually well shaven, being on his way to dine with John Syme at Ryedale, where young Mr Oswald of Auchincruive is to be of the party—or maybe in the opposite direction, to partake of the luxuries of John Bushby, at Tinwald Downs. But let us picture a more ordinary day. The evening is passing quietly at home, and Jean has made herself neat, and come in at six o'clock to give him his tea—a meal he always takes.

'At this period, however, there is something remarkably exciting in the proceedings of the French army under Pichegru; or Fox, Adam or Sheridan is expected to make an onslaught upon the ministry in the House of Commons. The post comes into Dumfries at eight o'clock at night. There is always a group of gentlemen on the street, eager to hear the news. Burns saunters out to the High Street, and waits amongst the rest. The intelligence of the evening is very interesting. The Convention has decreed the annexation of the Netherlands—or the new treason-bill has passed the House of Lords, with only the feeble protest of Bedford, Derby, and Lauderdale. These things merit some discussion. The trades-lads go off to drink strong ale in the closes; the gentlemen glide in little groups into the King's Arms Hotel or the George. As for Burns, he will just have a single glass and a half-hour's chat beside John Hyslop's fire, and then go quietly home. So he soon finds his way to the little narrow close *where that vintner maintains his state*. There, however, one or two friends have already established themselves, all with precisely the same virtuous intent. They heartily greet the bard. Meg or John bustles about to give him his accustomed place, which no one ever disputes. And, somehow, the debate on the news of the evening leads on to other chat of an interesting kind. Then Burns becomes brilliant, and his friends give him the applause of their laughter. One jug succeeds another—mirth abounds—and it

is not till Mrs Hyslop has declared that they are going beyond all bounds, and she positively will not give them another drop of hot water, that our poet at length bethinks him of returning home, where Bonny Jean has been lost in peaceful slumber for three hours, after vainly wondering "what can be keeping Robert out so late the night." Burns gets to bed a little excited and worn out, but not in a state to provoke much remark from his amiable partner, in whom nothing can abate the veneration with which she has all along regarded him. And probably he is up next morning between seven and eight, to hear little Robert his day's lesson in *Cæsar*; or, if the season invites, to take a half-hour's stroll before breakfast along the favourite Dock Green.*

It is futile to regret that Burns did not devote the leisure hours of his later years to more important work than the writing and revising of songs. He had evidently thought much at one time of other forms of composition. Thus, in 1788, he planned a poetical autobiography, *The Poet's Progress*, and wrote short sketches of Creech and Smellie for it. At the end of 1789, stimulated by reading English plays and visiting the Dumfries theatre, he bethought him of a Scottish comedy of modern manners, but, so far as has been ascertained, never wrote a line of it. In autumn 1790, when Mr Ramsay of Ochertyre visited him, he talked of dramatising a droll legend of Robert the Bruce. What even he could have made of 'Rob Macquechan's elshen,' which ran nine inches up into the fugitive king's heel, we cannot tell. The Bruce play does not seem to have ever got beyond conception. It is supposed—but the conjecture is not supported by evidence—that the poet composed 'Bruce's Address' with the object of incorporating it in a more serious drama on the liberator of Scotland, which he then contemplated. We see now that he cast about for the subject of a Scottish opera like *The Duenna*, and it is not unlikely that, in the 'Lover's Morning Address to his Mistress,' he was trying his hand at such a kind of composition. This, too, the last of his schemes for an extended effort in literature, died at birth. It is possible that growing slackness of will owing to failing health was to blame for these failures. But it is equally possible that he made deliberate essays both in narrative (after 'Tam o' Shanter') and dramatic poetry, and as deliberately con-

* Dr Robert Chambers.

demned and rejected his own handiwork, and turned again to the song-writing, in which he knew himself to be a past-master. At this distance of time we can safely assume that he could have bettered both 'Tam o' Shanter' and the 'Jolly Beggars.' But we know he despaired of ever excelling the 'polish' of the one, and that he had almost entirely forgotten the existence of the other. Is it not at least a feasible theory that he gave his later years wholly to song-writing because he felt that his strength lay in that style of composition? Posterity has really no reason to complain because Burns left it the songs of 1789-1796 instead of a superior *Jock Howieson* or a Scottish imitation of *The Duenna*.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

January 1795.

MY DEAR SIR—I fear for my songs, however a few may please; yet originality is a coy feature in composition, and, in a multiplicity of efforts in the same style, disappears altogether. For these three thousand years, we poetic folks have been describing the Spring, for instance, and as the Spring continues the same, there must soon be a sameness in the imagery, &c., of these said rhyming folks. To wander a little from my first design, which was to give you a new song, just hot from the mint, give me leave to squeeze in a clever anecdote of my *Spring originality*:—

Some years ago, when I was young, and by no means the saint I am now, I was looking over, in company with a *belle-lettre* friend, a Magazine 'Ode to Spring,' when my friend fell foul of the recurrence of the same thoughts, and offered me a bet that it was impossible to produce an ode to Spring on an original plan. I accepted it, and pledged myself to bring in the verdant fields, the budding flowers, the chrystal streams, the melody of the groves, and a love-story into the bargain, and yet be original. Here follows the piece, and wrote for music too!

ODE TO SPRING.

TUNE—*The tither Morn.*

* * * * *

DAMON AND SYLVIA.

Yon wandering rill that marks the hill
 And glances o'er the brae, Sir,
 Slides by a bower where many a flower
 Sheds fragrance on the day, Sir;

There Damon lay with Sylvia gay,
 To love they thought no crime, Sir ;
 The wild-birds sang, the echoes rang,
 While Damon's *heart* beat time, Sir.*

* * * * *

Now for decency. A great critic, Aikin, on songs says, that Love and Wine are the exclusive themes for song-writing. The following is on neither subject, and consequently is no Song; but will be allowed, I think, to be two or three pretty good *prose* thoughts inverted into rhyme : †

A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT.

Is there for honest Poverty
 That hings his head, and a' that? all that
 The coward-slave, we pass him by,
 We dare be poor for a' that! ‡
 For a' that, and a' that,
 Our toils obscure, and a' that,
 The rank is but the guinea's stamp, §
 The Man's the gowd for a' that !

What though on hamely fare we dine,
 Wear hoddin grey, and a' that ; coarse home-made
woollen cloth
 Gie fools their silks and knaves their wine,
 A Man's a Man for a' that :

* This is the only presentable verse of the song.

† Mr John Maccunn, Professor of Moral Philosophy in University College, Liverpool, points out in his *Ethics of Citizenship*, p. 66 (Glasgow : James Maclehose & Sons), that what Burns modestly terms two or three pretty good prose thoughts inverted into rhyme 'suggest not only the sentiments but the very words of Paine.' A few quotations from *The Rights of Man* make the parallel very striking : 'The patriots of France have discovered in good time that rank and dignity in Society must take a new ground. The old one has fallen through. It must now take the substantial ground of character instead of the chimerical ground of titles. . . . The artificial Noble shrinks into a dwarf before the Noble of Nature. . . . Through all the vocabulary of Adam Smith there is not such an animal as a Duke or a Count. . . . It (the love of titles) talks about its fine blue ribbon like a girl, and shows its new garter like a child.' Finally, Professor Maccunn finds in Paine's, 'For what we can foresee, all Europe may form but one great republic, and man be free of the whole,' 'a feebler version of the closing verse of the poem in which Burns proclaims the universal brotherhood of man,' and asks 'Can we help wishing that all political philosophers could find their poets?'

‡ These four lines, the sense of which is often misunderstood, may be thus interpreted : 'Is there any one who hangs his head in shame at his poverty? If there is such a poor creature, we pass him by as a coward slave.'

§ A similar thought occurs in Wycherley's *Plain-Dealer*, which Burns may have seen : 'I weigh the man, not his title ; 'tis not the king's stamp can make the metal better or heavier. Your lord is a leaden shilling, which you bend every way, and which debases the stamp he bears.'

For a' that, and a' that,
 Their tinsel show, and a' that ;
 The honest man, tho' e'er sae poor,
 Is king o' men for a' that !

Ye see yon birkie ca'd a lord, fellow
 Wha struts, and stares, and a' that,
 Though hundreds worship at his word,
 He's but a coof for a' that : fool, ninny
 For a' that, and a' that,
 His ribband, star and a' that ;
 The man of independent mind
 He looks and laughs at a' that.

A prince can mak a belted knight,
 A marquis, duke and a' that ;
 But an honest man 's aboon his might— above
 Gude faith, he mauna fa' that ! * must not
 For a' that, and a' that,
 Their dignities, and a' that ;
 The pith o' sense and pride o' worth
 Are higher rank † than a' that !

Then let us pray that come it may,—
 As come it will for a' that—
 That Sense and Worth, o'er a' the earth,
 May bear the gree, and a' that. supremacy
 For a' that, and a' that,
 It's comin' yet for a' that,
 That Man to Man, the world o'er,
 Shall brothers be for a' that !

Jan. 15th.—The foregoing has lain by me this fortnight, for want of a spare moment. The Supervisor of Excise here being ill, I have been acting for him, and I assure you I have hardly five minutes to myself to thank you for your elegant present of Pindar [i.e. Peter Pindar]. The typography is admirable, and worthy of the truly original bard.

* 'Fa', as a noun, means lot or share ; as a verb, to get or obtain. Burns here uses the word in a violent sense—'He must not attempt or pretend to have that as a thing in his power.

† So in manuscript, though usually printed 'ranks.'

I do not give you the foregoing song for your book, but merely by way of *vive la bagatelle*; for the piece is not really poetry. How will the following do for 'Craigieburnwood?'

[For the new version of 'Craigieburn Wood,' here transcribed, see Vol. III., p. 333.]

Farewell! God bless you!

R. B.

By this time the panic which commenced in 1792, and caused every man who did not see perfection in the British constitution to be treated as a rabid revolutionary, had in a great measure subsided. The reaction in France against the Committee of Public Safety was in full flow, and Britain felt that she had nothing to dread from Radicals at home. The reformers of 1792 and 1793 began, accordingly, to raise their heads again, not to agitate for reform—for all idea of change for years to come had to be abandoned—but to claim liberty of speech. Conservatism felt that it could afford to be compassionate and forgiving; and Burns, amongst others, appears to have experienced the benefit of this relenting mood.

Both the house which he had occupied in the Wee Vennel and that now tenanted by him belonged to Captain John Hamilton of Allershaw, an amiable and excellent man, who had treated him from the first with great kindness. Burns had run into debt with Captain Hamilton, who seems to have been disappointed that his tenant did not favour him with enough of his company.

TO CAPTAIN JOHN HAMILTON, DUMFRIES.

SIR—It is even so—you are the only person in Dumfries, or in the world, to whom I have *run in debt*; and I took the freedom with you, because I believed, and do still believe, that I may do it with more impunity as to my feelings than any other person almost that I ever met with. I will settle with you soon; and I assure you, Sir, it is with infinite pain that I have transgressed on your goodness. The unlucky fact for me is that about the beginning of these disastrous times, in a moment of imprudence, I lent my name to a friend who has since been unfortunate; and of course, I had a sum to pay which my very limited income and large family could ill afford. God forbid, Sir, that anything should ever distress you as much as writing this card has done me.

With the sincerest gratitude and most respectful esteem, I have the honor to be, Sir, your very humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

That the Poet was in very straitened circumstances must be inferred from a letter to Stewart of Closeburn. To pay Hamilton he had to borrow from Stewart.

TO WILLIAM STEWART.

DUMFRIES, *January 15, 1795.*

This is a painful disagreeable letter; and the first of the kind I ever wrote—I am truly in serious distress for three or four guineas; can you, my dear Sir, accommodate me? It will, indeed, truly oblige me. These accursed times, by stopping up importation, have for this year, at least, lopt off a full third of my income, and with my large family, this to me is a distressing matter.—Farewell, and God bless you!

R. BURNS.

TO CAPTAIN HAMILTON.

DUMFRIES, *Jan. 1795.*

I enclose you three guineas, and shall soon settle all with you. I shall not mention your goodness to me; it is beyond my power to describe either the feelings of my wounded soul at not being able to pay you as I ought, or the grateful respect with which I have the honor to be, Sir, your deeply obliged humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

TO ROBERT BURNS.

DUMFRIES, *30th Jan. 1795.*

DEAR SIR—At same time that I acknowledge the receipt of three guineas to account of house-rent, will you permit me to enter a complaint of a different nature? When you first came here I courted your acquaintance; I wished to see you; I asked you to call in and take a family-dinner now and then, when it suited your convenience.

For more than twelve months you have never entered my door, but seemed rather shy when we met. This kept me from sending any further particular invitation.

If I have in any shape offended or from inadvertency hurt the delicacy of your feelings, tell me so, and I will endeavour to set it to rights.

If you are disposed to renew our acquaintance, I will be glad to see you to a family-dinner at three o'clock on Sunday, and, at any rate, hope you will believe me, dear Sir, your sincere friend,

JOHN HAMILTON.

Burns's answer came next morning :—

TO CAPTAIN HAMILTON.

Saturday Morn.

SIR—I was from home, and had not the opportunity of seeing your more than polite, most friendly card. It is not possible, most worthy Sir, that you could do anything to offend anybody. My backwardness proceeds alone from the abashing consciousness of my obscure station in the ranks of life. Many an evening have I sighed to call in and spend it at your social fireside; but a shyness of appearing obtrusive amid the fashionable visitants occasionally there kept me at a distance. It shall do so no more. On Monday I must be in the country, and most part of the week; but the first leisure evening I shall avail myself of your hospitable goodness. With the most ardent sentiments of gratitude and respect, I have the honor to be, Sir, your highly obliged, humble servant,
ROBT. BURNS.

The warmth of Hamilton's letter would seem to show that Burns was beginning to recover the good opinion of many who had been offended, if not alienated, by the exaggerated reports which had been circulated as to his political opinions.

The movement towards a reconciliation with Mrs Riddel, which commenced in November, had not been checked. About this time she sent Burns a book, along with a song expressive of her feelings on their late estrangement.

TO MRS WALTER RIDDEL.

[March 1795.]

Mr Burns's compliments to Mrs Riddel—is much obliged to her for her polite attention in sending him the book. Owing to Mr B. being at present acting as Supervisor of Excise, a department that occupies his every hour of the day, he has not that time to spare which is necessary for any *belle-lettre* pursuit; but, as he will in a week or two again return to his wonted leisure, he will then pay that attention to Mrs R.'s beautiful song 'To thee, lov'd Nith,' which it so well deserves.

When *Anacharsis' Travels** come to hand, which Mrs Riddel mentioned as her gift to the public library, Mr B. will thank her for a reading of it, previous to her sending it to the library, as it is a book he has never seen, and he wishes to have a longer perusal than the regulations of the library allow.

Friday Eve.

P.S.—Mr Burns will be much obliged to Mrs Riddel if she will favor him with a perusal of any of her poetical pieces which he may not have seen.

* *Voyage du Jeune Anacharsis*, by J. J. Barthélemy, 4 vols. 1788.

Mrs Riddel's song has been preserved :

TO THEE, LOVED NITH.

To thee, loved Nith, thy gladsome plains,
 Where late with careless thought I ranged,
 Though prest with care and sunk in wo,
 To thee I bring a heart unchanged.
 I love thee, Nith, thy banks and braes,*
 Though Memory there my bosom tear,
 For there he roved that broke my heart,
 Yet to that heart, ah, still how dear !

And now your banks and bonny braes
 But waken sad remembrance' smart ;
 The very shades I held most dear
 Now strike fresh anguish to my heart :
 Deserted bower ! where are they now—
 Ah ! where the garlands that I wove
 With faithful care, each morn to deck
 The altars of ungrateful love ?

The flowers of spring, how gay they bloomed
 When last with him I wandered here !
 The flowers of spring are passed away
 For wintry horrors dark and drear.
 Yon osiered stream, by whose lone banks
 My songs have lulled him oft to rest,
 Is now in icy fetters locked—
 Cold as my false love's frozen breast !

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 30th January 1795.

MY DEAR SIR—I thank you heartily for 'Nannie's Awa,' as well as for 'Craigieburn,' which I think a very comely pair. Your observation on the difficulty of original writing in a number of efforts in the same style, strikes me very forcibly ; and it has again and again excited my wonder to find you continually surmounting this difficulty, in the many delightful songs you have sent me. Your *vive la bagatelle* song, 'For a' that,' shall undoubtedly be included in my list. G. T.

Burns's duties as acting supervisor brought him early in February to the village of Ecclefechan, in Annandale—a place

* Compare Burns's own 'Ye banks and braes.'

which will continue to be memorable in Scottish biography as the birthplace of several men who were all connected with the poet's history. The first was his friend William Nicol. The second was Dr Currie, of Liverpool, his authoritative biographer. A third, who was born in December of this very year, was Thomas Carlyle, than whom no man has written more generously, and on the whole more fairly, about Burns. Burns came to Ecclefechan in the midst of an extraordinary fall of snow, which threatened to keep him a prisoner in his inn for many days. It was such a snowfall as no living man remembered. Most people throughout Scotland, on rising in the morning, found their houses buried up to the windows of the upper storey; and in some hollows of the Campsie Fells, near Glasgow, the snow drifted to depths of from eighty to a hundred feet. Some roads were impassable for weeks; and even in the streets of Edinburgh the snow had not entirely disappeared on the king's birthday, the 4th of June.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

ECCLEFECHAN, 7th February 1795.

MY DEAR THOMSON—You cannot have any idea of the predicament in which I write you. In the course of my duty as Supervisor (in which capacity I have acted of late) I came yesternight to this unfortunate, wicked little village.* I have gone forward, but snows of ten feet deep have impeded my progress: I have tried to *gae back the gate I cam again*, but the same obstacle has shut me up within insuperable bars. To add to my misfortune, since dinner, a scraper has been torturing catgut, in sounds that would have insulted the dying agonies of a sow under the hands of a Butcher, and thinks himself, *on that very account*, exceeding good company. In fact, I have been in a dilemma, either to get drunk, to forget these miseries, or to hang myself, to get rid of them; like a prudent man (a character congenial to my every thought, word, and deed), I, of two evils, have chosen the least, and am very drunk—at your service!†

I wrote you yesterday from Dumfries. I had not time *then* to tell you all I wanted to say; and, Heaven knows, at present I have not capacity.

* Currie naïvely remarks that the poet must have been tipsy indeed to abuse sweet Ecclefechan at this rate. The general lucidity of the letter, however, points to the possibility, to say the least, that Burns here indulged in comic exaggeration, as he often did at the expense of his matter-of-fact correspondent.

† Thomson, before sending this MS. to Currie, interpolated here: 'The handwriting shows it, and I can swear to the truth.'

Do you know an air—I am sure you must know it—‘We’ll gang na mair to yon town?’ I think, in slowish time, it would make an excellent song. I am highly delighted with it; and if you should think it worthy of your attention, I have a fair dame in my eye to whom I would consecrate it. You will find a good set of it in Bowie’s Collection; and try it with this doggerel, until I give you a better:—

Chorus—O wat ye wha’s in yon town
 Ye see the e’enin sun upon?
 The dearest maid’s in yon town
 That e’enin’ sun is shinin on.

O sweet to me yon spreading tree,
 Where Jeanie wanders aft her lane; often alone
 The hawthorn flower that shades her bower,
 Oh, when shall I behold again!

As I am just going to bed, I wish you a good night. R. B.

P.S.—As I am likely to be storm-stead here to-morrow, if I am in the humor, you shall have a long letter from me. R. B.

According to a Dumfriesshire tradition, the ‘fair dame’ of the name of ‘Jeanie’ whom Burns had in his eye when he wrote these verses was not Mrs Whelpdale, but Jeanie Scott, daughter of the Ecclefechan postmaster. The post-office was opposite the inn in which Burns was stormstead; and, seeing her, he inscribed these lines on a window:

O had each Scot on English ground
 Been bonnie Scott, as thou art,
 The stoutest heart of English kind
 Had yielded like a coward.*

* This information is based on an interesting fragmentary manuscript letter full of gossip about Burns which was found among the papers of Alexander Laing and Peter Buchan, and is now in the possession of Mr Stephen Alison, Glasgow, who has obligingly communicated its contents to me. It is dated Dumfries, 30th April 1815, and its author, whose name is not given, professes to have known Burns intimately. The ordinary version of the lines is:

Oh had each Scot of ancient times
 Been Jeany Scott as thou art,
 The bravest heart on English ground
 Had yielded like a coward.

According to Allan Cunningham, the Jeany Scott of these verses ‘belonged to Ecclefechan, although she resided in Ayr, and cheered the poet not only with her sweet looks but sweet voice.’—W. W.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[Post-mark, February 9], 1795.

I am afraid, my dear Sir, that printing your songs in the manner of Ritson's would counteract the sale of your Greater Work ; but secluded as I am from the world, its humours and caprices, I cannot pretend to judge in the matter. If you are ultimately frustrated of Pleyel's assistance, what think you of applying to Clarke? This, you will say, would be breaking faith with your subscribers ; but, bating that circumstance, I am confident that Clarke is equal, in *Scottish* song, to take up the pen, even after Pleyel.

I shall, at a future period, write you my sentiments as to sending my bagatelles to a newspaper.

Here is another trial at your favorite air:—

O LASSIE, ARE YE SLEEPING YET?

TUNE—*Let me in this ae Night.*

O lassie, are ye sleeping yet,	
Or are ye waukin, I would wit?	know
For Love has bound me hand and foot,	
And I would fain be in, jo.	sweetheart

<i>Chorus</i> —O let me in this ae night,	one
This ae, ae, ae night ;	
For pity's sake this ae night,	
O rise and let me in, jo.	

Thou hear'st the winter wind an' weet,	wet, rain
Nae star blinks thro' the driving sleet ;	peeps
Take pity on my weary feet,	
And shield me frae the rain, jo.	

The bitter blast that round me blows	blows
Unheeded howls, unheeded fa's ;	falls
The cauldness o' thy heart's the cause	
Of a' my care and pine, jo.	

HER ANSWER.

O tell na me o' wind an' rain,	
Upbraid na me wi' cauld disdain,	cold
Gae back the gate ye cam again,	way
I winna let you in, jo.	

Chorus—I tell you now this ae night,
 This ae, ae, ae night ;
 And ance for a' this ae night, once for all
 I winna let ye in, jo. will not

The snellest blast, at mirkest hours, keen—dark
 That round the pathless wanderer pours
 Is nocht to what poor She endures nothing
 That's trusted faithless Man, jo.

The sweetest flower that deck'd the mead,
 Now trodden like the vilest weed—
 Let simple maid the lesson read,
 The weird may be her ain, jo. destiny

The bird that charm'd his summer-day
 Is now the cruel Fowler's prey ;
 Let witless, trusting Woman say
 How aft her-fate's the same, jo !

I do not know whether it will do. Yours ever, R. B.

P.S.—By G——, I have thought better !

The bird that charm'd his summer-day,
 And now the cruel Fowler's prey,
 Let that to witless Woman say
 The gratefu' heart of Man, jo.

R. B.

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 25th February 1795.

I have to thank you, my dear Sir, for two epistles—one containing 'Let me in this ae night,' and the other from Ecclefechan, proving that, drunk or sober, your 'mind is never muddy.' You have displayed great address in the above song. Her answer is excellent and at same time takes away the indelicacy that otherwise would have attached to his entreaties. I like the song, as it stands, very much.

I had hopes you would be arrested some days at Ecclefechan and be obliged to beguile the tedious forenoons by song-making. It will give

me pleasure to receive the verses you intend for 'O wat ye wha's in yon town?'
G. T.

The great storm of February 1795 coincided with a Scottish county election. The death of General Stewart in January had made a vacancy in the representation of the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, adjoining the county of Dumfries. A writ had been issued and entrusted to Lord Garlies, M.P., son of the Earl of Galloway; but he kept it back for several weeks, for the ostensible reason that it was impossible for the electors at such a season to meet for the recording of their votes. Meanwhile, public feeling was strongly excited, the vacant seat being contested by a Tory, supported by the Galloway influence, and an independent country gentleman of Whig politics. The latter was the same Patrick Heron of Kerroughtree whom Burns had visited in June of the past year, soon after his meeting with David M'Culloch. The Tory candidate was Gordon of Balmaghie, himself a man of property and influence, and fortified by the favour of his uncle, Murray of Broughton, one of the wealthiest proprietors in the south of Scotland, as well as by the interest of the Earl of Galloway.

Burns with his pen took an active share in the contest. He saw on the one side a man of high character and warm heart, who was a personal friend and held political views identical with his own; and on the other, men whom he detested, like Lord Galloway and John Bushby. He threw off several ballads, and even circulated them in print with impunity—which proves that the Board of Excise storm had blown over.

BALLADS ON MR HERON'S ELECTION, 1795.

BALLAD FIRST.

Wham will we send to London town,
To Parliament and a' that?
Or wha in a' the country round
The best deserves to fa' that?
For a' that, and a' that,
'Thro' Galloway and a' that,
Where is the Laird or belted Knight
That best deserves to fa' that?

attain to

Wha sees Kerroughtree's open yett—

door

And wha is't never saw that?—

Wha ever wi' Kerroughtree met

And has a doubt of a' that?

For a' that, and a' that,

Here's Heron yet for a' that!

The independent patriot,

The honest man, and a' that.

Tho' wit and worth, in either sex,

Saint Mary's Isle * can shaw that,

Wi' Lords and Dukes let Selkirk mix,

And weel does Selkirk fa' that.

become

For a' that, and a' that,

Here's Heron yet for a' that!

An independent commoner

Shall be the man for a' that.

But why should we to Nobles jeuk,

bend

And is't against the law, that?

And even a Lord may be a gowk,

fool

Wi' ribban, star, and a' that.

For a' that, and a' that,

Here's Heron yet for a' that!

A Lord may be a lousy loun,

fellow

Wi' ribban, star, and a' that.

A beardless boy comes o'er the hills

Wi' s uncle's purse and a' that;

But we'll hae ane frae 'mang oursels,

A man we ken, and a' that.

For a' that, and a' that,

Here's Heron yet for a' that!

We are na to be bought and sold

Like nowte, and naigs, and a' that.

cattle
—horses

Then let us drink :—'The Stewartry,

Kerroughtree's laird, and a' that,

* The seat of the Earl of Selkirk.

Our representative to be':

For weel he's worthy a' that!
 For a' that, and a' that,
 Here's Heron yet for a' that!
 A House of Commons such as he,
 They wad be blest that saw that.

BALLAD SECOND: THE ELECTION.

TUNE—*Fy, let us a' to the Bridal.*

Fy, let us a' to Kirkeudbright,*
 For there will be bickerin there: a scrimmage
 For Murray's light horse are to muster,
 An' O, how the heroes will swear! †
 An' there 'll be Murray commander, ‡
 An' Gordon the battle to win: §
 Like brothers, they 'll stan' by each other,
 Sae knit in alliance and kin.

An' there 'll be black-nebbit Johnie, || nosed
 The tongue o' the trump to them a': Jew's harp
 Gin he get na Hell for his haddin, dwelling
 The Deil gets nae justice ava! at all
 An' there 'll be Kempleton's birkie, ¶ young Kempleton
 A chiel no sae black at the bane; fellow—bone
 For as to his fine nabob fortune—
 We'll e'en let the subject alane.**

* Pronounced Kir-coo'-bry.

† This ballad is composed in imitation of a rough but amusing specimen of the old ballad literature of Scotland, descriptive of the company attending a country-wedding—

'Fy, let us a' to the wedding,
 For there 'll be liltin there,' &c.

‡ Mr Murray of Broughton. This gentleman had left his wife, and eloped with a lady of rank. His great wealth had permitted him to do this with comparative impunity, and even without forfeiting the alliance of his wife's relations, one of whom he was supporting in this election.

§ Mr Gordon of Balmaghie, the government candidate.

|| John Bushby.

¶ William Bushby of Kempleton, brother of John. He had been involved in the downfall of Douglas, Heron & Co.'s Bank, and had subsequently gone to India, where he realised a fortune.

** Variation—

'For now what he wan in the Indies,
 Has scoured up the laddie fu' clean.'

An' there 'll be Wigton's new sheriff—*
 Dame Justice fu' brawly has sped :
 She's gotten the heart of a Bushby,
 But Lord ! what's become o' the head ?
 An' there 'll be Cardoness, Esquire,†
 Sae mighty in Cardoness' eyes :
 A wight that will weather damnation,
 For the Devil the prey would despise.

bravely

An' there 'll be Douglasses doughty,
 New christening towns far and near : ‡
 Abjuring their democrat doings
 An' kissing the arse of a peer !
 An' there 'll be Kenmure sae generous,§
 Whase honour is proof to the storm :
 To save them from stark reprobation
 He lent them his name to the firm !

But we winna mention Redcastle,||
 The body—e'en let him escape !
 He'd venture the gallows for siller,
 An' 'twere na the cost o' the rape !
 An' whare is our King's Lord Lieutenant,
 Sae famed for his gratefu' return ?
 The billie is getting his Questions¶
 To say at St Stephen's the morn.

won't

money

rope

fellow

to-morrow

An' there 'll be lads o' the gospel :
 Muirhead, wha's as guid as he's true ; **
 An' there 'll be Buittle's Apostle,
 Wha's mair o' the black than the blue ; †† not true blue
 An' there 'll be folk frae St Mary's,
 A house o' great merit and note :

* Mr Maitland Bushby, son of John, and new appointed sheriff of Wigtownshire. The same idea occurs in 'The Epistle of Esopus to Maria.'

† David Maxwell of Cardoness was created a baronet in 1804, and died in 1825.

‡ Sir William and James Douglas, brothers, of Carlinwark (which the former had changed to Castle-Douglas by royal warrant) and Orchardton.

§ Mr Gordon of Kenmure. See p. 17.

|| Walter Sloan Lawrie of Redcastle.

¶ Youth, committing his Catechism to memory.

** Rev. Mr Muirhead, minister of Urr (1742-1805). He was 'of Logan,' and chief of the name or Clan Muirhead.

†† Rev. George Maxwell, minister of Buittle (1762-1807).

The Deil ane but honors them highly,
The Deil ane will gie them his vote !

Not one

An' there'll be wealthy young Richard,*
Dame Fortune should hang by the neck :
But for prodigal thriftless bestowing,
His merit had won him respect.
An' there'll be rich brither nabobs ;
Tho' nabobs, yet men o' the first ! †
An' there'll be Collieston's whiskers, ‡
An' Quinton—o' lads no the warst ! §

An' there'll be Stamp-office Johnie : ||
Tak tent how ye purchase a dram !
An' there'll be gay Cassencarry, ¶
An' there'll be Colonel Tam ; **
An' there'll be trusty Kerroughtree,
Whase honour was ever his law :
If the virtues were pack't in a parcel,
His worth might be sample for a' !

care

An' can we forget the auld Major, ††
Wha'll ne'er be forgot in the Greys ?
Our flatt'ry we'll keep for some other :
Him only it's justice to praise !
An' there'll be maiden Kilkerran ; ‡‡
An' also Barskimming's guid Knight ; §§
An' there'll be roaring Birtwhistle ||||—
Yet luckily roars in the right !

Scots Greys

* Richard Oswald of Auchincruive, heir to the Mrs Oswald who was the subject of Burns's 'Ode,' see Vol. III., p. 56.

† Messrs Hannay.

‡ Copland of Collieston.

§ Quintin, son of the M'Adam of Craigengillan to whom Burns in 1786 wrote a rhymed epistle. See Vol. I., p. 410.

|| John Syme, distributor of stamps, Dumfries.

¶ Colonel M'Kenzie of Cassencarry.

** Colonel Goldie of Goldielea.

†† Major Heron, brother of the Whig candidate.

‡‡ Sir Adam Fergusson of Kilkerran. See Vol. I., p. 279, 'The author's earnest cry and prayer,' where he is called 'Chaste Kilkerran.'

§§ Sir William Miller of Barskimming; afterwards a judge under the designation of Lord Glenlee.

|||| Alexander Birtwhistle, Provost of Kirkcudbright.

An' there, frae the Niddesdale border,
 Will mingle the Maxwells in droves :
 Teuch Johnie,* Staunch Geordie,† and Wattie‡ Tough
 'That girms for the fishes an' loaves ! long
 An' there 'll be Logan M'Doual—§
 Sculdudd'ry an' he will be there ! Fornication
 An' also the wild Scot o' Galloway,
 Sogering, gunpowther Blair ! ||

Then hey the chaste interest of Broughton !
 An' hey for the blessings 'twill bring !
 It may send Balmaghie to the Commons—
 In Sodom 'twould mak him a King !
 An' hey for the sanctified Murray
 Our land wha wi' chapels has stor'd ;
 He founder'd his horse among harlots,
 But gie'd the auld naig to the Lord ! nag

Though Burns had, we may well believe, anything but his own interest in view in writing these diatribes, it appears that they brought him at least a glimpse of a hope of promotion. Mr Heron, having perused one, wrote to John Syme, suggesting that he might be able to do something for the poet. In consequence of these inquiries Burns wrote the following letter, which clearly proves that in the penultimate year of his life he, so far from being 'desperate and hopeless,' contemplated 'a life of literary leisure with a decent competence.'

TO MR HERON OF HERON.

SIR—I enclose you some copies of a couple of political ballads, one of which, I believe, you have never seen. Would to Heaven I could make you master of as many votes in the Stewartry. But—

* Maxwell of Terraughty, the venerable gentleman on whose birthday Burns wrote some verses. See Vol. III., p. 294.

† George Maxwell of Carruchan.

‡ Wellwood Maxwell.

§ Captain M'Douall of Logan, whose connection with the hapless Peggy Kennedy has been alluded to in Vol. I., p. 270.

|| Major Blair of Dunskey.

Who does the utmost that he can
Does well, acts nobly—angels could do no more.*

In order to bring my humble efforts to bear with more effect on the foe, I have privately printed a good many copies of both ballads and have sent them among friends all about the country. To pillory on Parnassus the rank reprobation of character, the utter dereliction of all principle, in a profligate junto which has not only outraged virtue but violated common decency; which, spurning even hypocrisy as paltry iniquity below their daring—to unmask their flagitiousness in the broadest day, to deliver such over to their merited fate is surely not merely innocent, but laudable; is not only propriety, but virtue. You have, already as your auxiliary, the sober detestation of mankind on the head of your opponents; and I swear by the lyre of Thalia to muster on your side all the votaries of honest laughter and fair, candid ridicule!

I am extremely obliged to you for your kind mention of my interests in a letter which Mr Syme shewed me. At present, my situation in life must be in a great measure stationary, at least for two or three years. The statement is this:—I am on the supervisors' list; and as we come on there by precedence, in two or three years I shall be at the head of that list, and be appointed *of course*. Then, a FRIEND might be of service to me in getting me into a place of the Kingdom which I would like. A supervisor's income varies from about a hundred and twenty, to two hundred a year; but the business is an incessant drudgery and would be nearly a complete bar to every species of literary pursuit. The moment I am appointed supervisor, in the common routine, I may be nominated on the collectors' List; and this is always a business purely of political patronage. A collectorship varies much, from better than two hundred a year to near a thousand. They also come forward by precedence on the list; and have, besides a handsome income, a life of complete leisure. A life of literary leisure with a decent competence is the summit of my wishes. It would be the prudish affectation of silly pride in me to say that I do not need, or would not be indebted to, a political friend; at the same time, Sir, I by no means lay my affairs before you thus, to hook my dependent situation on your benevolence. If, in my progress of life, an opening should occur where the good offices of a gentleman of your public character and political consequence might bring me forward, I shall petition your goodness with the same frankness as I now do myself the honor to subscribe myself, &c.

R. B.

After the election, which resulted in Mr Heron's favour, Burns could not resist the temptation to sing a pæan over the discomfited earl and his factotum Bushby. His third ballad was modelled on *The Age and Life of Man*.

* 'Who does the best his circumstance allows
Does well, acts nobly; angels could do no more.'

Young's *Night Thoughts*, Night II., line 91.

BALLAD THIRD: JOHN BUSHBY'S LAMENTATION.

TUNE—*The Babes in the Wood.*

'Twas in the Seventeen Hunder year
 O' grace, and Ninety-Five,
 That year I was the wae'est man saddest
 Of onie man alive.

In March the three-an'-twentieth morn,
 The sun raise clear an' bright ; rose
 But O, I was a waefu' man
 Ere to-fa' o' the night ! nightfall

Yerl Galloway lang did rule this land Earl
 Wi' equal right and fame,
 Fast knit in chaste and holy bands
 With Broughton's noble name.

Yerl Galloway's man o' men was I
 And chief o' Broughton's host :
 So twa blind beggars, on a string,
 The faithfu' tyke will trust !

But now Yerl Galloway's sceptre's broke
 And Broughton's wi' the slain,
 And I my ancient craft may try,
 Sin' honesty is gane.

'Twas by the banks o' bonie Dee,
 Beside Kirkcudbright's towers,
 The Stewart and the Murray there
 Did muster a' their powers.

The Murray on the auld gray yaud old horse
 Wi' wingèd spurs did ride : *
 That auld gray yaud a' Nidsdale rade,
 He staw upon Nidside. stole

* An obscure allusion to the lady with whom Murray had eloped—a member of the house of Johnstone, whose well-known crest is a winged spur.

An' there had na been the Yerl himsel,
 O, there had been nae play !
 But Garlies was to London gane,
 And sae the kye might stray.

An' = if

cattle

And there was Balmaghie, I ween—
 In front rank he wad shine ;
 But Balmaghie had better been
 Drinkin' Madeira wine.

And frae Glenkens cam to our aid
 A chief o' doughty deed :
 In case that worth should wanted be,
 O' Kenmure we had need.

And by our banners march'd Muirhead,
 And Buittle was na slack,
 Whase haly priesthood nane could stain,
 For wha could dye the black ?

And there was grave Squire Cardoness,
 Look'd on till a' was done :
 Sae in the tower o' Cardoness
 A howlet sits at noon.

owl

And there led I the Bushby clan :
 My gamesome billie, Will,
 And my son Maitland, wise as brave,
 My footsteps follow'd still.

crony

The Douglas and the Heron's name,
 We set nought to their score ;
 The Douglas and the Heron's name
 Had felt our weight * before.

But Douglasses o' weight had we :
 The pair o' lusty lairds,
 For building cot-houses sae fam'd,
 And christenin' kail-yards.

kitchen-gardens

* Variation—'Might.'

And there Redcastle drew his sword
 That ne'er was stained wi' gore
 Save on a wand'rer lame and blind,
 To drive him frae his door.

And last cam creepin Collieston,
 Was mair in fear than wrath ;
 Ae knave was constant in his mind—
 To keep that knave frae scaith.

One
 harm

The country gentlemen probably submitted to Burns's assault with a good enough grace. There was, however, among his victims an eccentric and outspoken clergyman, the Rev. James Muirhead, minister of Urr. He was a man of birth and a landed proprietor. He boasted that he was the Chief of the Muirheads, and his neighbours had of course heard a good deal about his family heraldry. Burns introduced him in the second of his ballads by the single line—

‘Muirhead, wha's as guid as he's true.’

There is a still more pointed allusion to him in the third ballad. Muirhead, who was familiar with the Edinburgh wits of the period, was himself a scribbler of epigrams and lampoons, and little disposed to bear Burns's stinging thrusts with Christian meekness. He caused a *brochure* to be printed in Edinburgh, commencing thus :

The ancient poets, all agree,
 Sang sweeter far than modern we,
 In this, besides, their racy rhymes
 Were told in far, far fewer lines, ' &c.

Then he quoted—

MARTIALIS LIBER XI., EP. 67.

IN VACERRAM.

‘Et delator es et calumniator ;
 Et fraudator es et negotiator ;
 Et fellator es et lanista : miror
 Quare non habeas, Vacerra, nummos.’

There followed a translation, or rather paraphrase :

‘Vacerras, shabby son of w——,
 Why do thy patrons keep thee poor?
 Bribe-worthy service thou canst boast
 At once their bulwark and their post;
 Thou art a sycophant, a traitor,
 A liar, a calumniator,
 Who conscience (hadst thou that) would’st sell,
 Nay, lave the common sewer of hell,
 For whisky : eke, most precious imp,
 Thou art a rhymster, gauger, pimp;
 Whence comes it, then, Vacerras, that
 Thou still art poor as a church-rat?’

This is almost the only known contemporary satire on Burns which obtained the honour of print. It will be found that the poet made a rejoinder.*

In the early part of 1795 two companies of volunteers were raised by Dumfries, as its quota towards the force which it was believed necessary to establish at that crisis, when the regular army was for the most part fighting against France abroad.† Many a liberal who had incurred the wrath or suspicion of the government and its friends was glad to enrol himself in these corps, in order to prove his loyalty. Syme, Maxwell, and others of the

* ‘It consists with my knowledge, that no publication in answer to the scurrilities of Burns ever did him so much harm in public opinion, or made Burns himself feel so sore, as Dr Muirhead’s translation of Martial’s epigram. When I remonstrated with the doctor against his printing and circulating that translation, I asked him how he proved that Vacerras was a gauger as well as Burns. He answered : “Martial calls him *fellator*, which means a *sucker*, or a man who drinks from the cask.”’—*From a MS., by the late Alexander Young, Esq., W.S., Edinburgh.*

‘[Died, May 16, 1808] at Spottes Hall, Dunscore, the Rev. Dr James Muirhead, minister of Urr, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, and thirty-eighth of his ministry.’—*Magazine Obituary.*

† ‘*War-Office, March 24 (1795).*—Dumfriesshire Corps of Volunteers. A. S. De Peyster, Esq., to be Major Commandant; John Hamilton and John Finnan, Esq., Captains; David Newall and Wellwood Maxwell, gent., First-Lieutenants; Francis Shortt and Thomas White, gent., Second-Lieutenants.’—*Gazette.*

On the king’s birthday, a set of colours, prepared by Mrs De Peyster, wife of the commandant, was presented in a ceremonious manner to the Dumfries Volunteers, in the square where the Duke of Queensberry’s monument stands. The Rev. Mr Burnside, one of the clergymen of the town, said a prayer on the occasion, and complimented the corps on its good discipline, which he said had been mainly owing to De Peyster’s assiduity in drilling. ‘At four o’clock, the whole Volunteers, and a number of other gentlemen, were entertained at dinner in the King’s Arms by the magistrates; and at five the company adjourned to the court-house, where the king’s health was drunk, and other loyal and constitutional toasts suited to the occasion. The whole day was spent in the utmost harmony,’ &c.—*Dumfries Journal*, June 9, 1795.

Dumfries Whigs, took this step, and Burns also joined the corps, though according to Allan Cunningham, not without opposition from some of the Tories. 'I remember well,' says Cunningham, 'the appearance of that respectable corps; their odd, but not ungraceful dress; white kerseymere breeches and waistcoat; short blue coat, faced with red; and round hat, surmounted by a bearskin, like the helmets of our Horse-guards; and I remember the poet also—his very swarthy face, his ploughman stoop, his large dark eyes, and his indifferent dexterity in the handling of his arms.' The poet gave further and more public proof of his patriotic sentiments in regard to Gallic propagandism by penning his well-known song—

THE DUMFRIES VOLUNTEERS.

TUNE—*Push about the Jorum.*

Does haughty Gaul invasion threat ?	
Then let the louns beware, Sir !	fellows
There's WOODEN WALLS upon our seas,	
And VOLUNTEERS on shore, Sir :	
The <i>Nith</i> shall run to <i>Corsincon</i> ,*	
The <i>Criffel</i> † sink in <i>Solway</i>	
Ere we permit a foreign foe	
On British ground to rally !	
We'll ne'er permit a foreign foe	
On British ground to rally !	

O let us not, like snarling curs,	
In wrangling be divided,	
Till, slap ! come in an <i>unco loun</i>	stranger fellow
And wi' a rung decide it !	cudgel
Be Britain still to Britain true,	
Among oursels united !	
For never but by <i>British hands</i>	
Maun <i>British wrangs</i> be righted !	must
No ! never but by <i>British hands</i>	
Shall <i>British wrangs</i> be righted !	

* A high hill at the source of the Nith.—B.

† A well-known mountain near the mouth of the Nith.

The *Kettle* o' the Kirk and State
 Perhaps a *clout* may fail in 't; patch
 But deil a *foreign* tinker loun
 Shall ever ca' a nail in 't. drive
 Our FATHER'S BLUDE the *Kettle* bought! blood
 And wha wad dare to spoil it? who would
 By Heav'ns! the sacrilegious dog
 Shall fuel be to boil it!
 By Heav'ns! the sacrilegious dog
 Shall fuel be to boil it!

The wretch that would a *Tyrant* own,
 And the wretch, his true-born brother,
 Who would set the *Mob* aboon the *Throne*, above
 May they be damn'd together!
 Who will not sing 'God save the King'
 Shall hang as high's the steeple;
 But while we sing 'God save the King'
 We'll ne'er forget THE PEOPLE!
 But while we sing 'God save the King'
 We'll ne'er forget THE PEOPLE.

This ballad appeared in the *Dumfries Journal* of 5th May, was quickly copied by other newspapers and periodicals, including the *Scots Magazine*. In the same spirit was an epigram which he is said to have recited at the customary festive meeting of the loyal and patriotic to celebrate Rodney's victory of the 12th of April 1782:

TOAST FOR THE 12TH OF APRIL.

Instead of a song, boys, I'll give you a toast:
 Here's the Mem'ry of those on the Twelfth that we lost!—
 We lost, did I say?—No, by Heav'n, that we found!
 For their fame it shall live while the world goes round.
 The next in succession I'll give you: the King!
 Whoe'er would betray him, on high may he swing!
 And here's the grand fabric, our Free Constitution
 As built on the base of the great Revolution!

And, longer with Politics not to be cramm'd,
 Be Anarchy curs'd and be Tyranny damn'd !
 And who would to Liberty e'er prove disloyal,
 May his son be a hangman—and he his first trial !

Cunningham says of the invasion-song, that 'it hit the taste and suited the feelings of the humbler classes, who added to it the "Poor and Honest Sodger," the "Song of Death," and "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled." Hills echoed with it ; it was heard in every street, and did more to right the mind of the rustic part of the population than all the speeches of Pitt and Dundas, or the chosen Five-and-Forty.'

We do not find, however, that from the first to last of Burns's career any movement worthy of the name was made to secure for him any State patronage. There is no trace of his ever having attracted the slightest attention from the royal family. No Minister smiled upon him. Scarcely a single Tory noble or gentleman granted him further grace than a subscription for his *Poems*. All his active patrons were of the Whig party, who, for the time being, were powerless to advance him beyond the humble function to which the favour of one of them had condemned him. This is the more remarkable, since it appears that Addington took a deep and lively interest in the poetry of 'the Scottish ploughman,' and that his strains had touched even the cold bosom of Pitt. Lockhart learned, apparently on good authority, that Pitt, at Lord Liverpool's table, said of the verses of Burns not long after his death : 'I can think of no verse since Shakespeare's that has so much the appearance of coming sweetly from nature.' * Allan Cunningham affirms that Addington reminded Pitt of the desert of the poet in his lifetime ; but Pitt 'pushed the bottle to Lord Melville, and did nothing.' † Lockhart adds : 'Had Burns put forth some newspaper squibs upon Lepaux and Carnot, or a smart pamphlet "On the State of the Country," he might have been more attended to in his lifetime. It is common to say : "What is everybody's business is nobody's business ;" but one may be pardoned for thinking that, in such cases as this, that

* Lockhart's *Life of Burns*, p. 227.

† Cunningham's *Life of Burns*, p. 262.

which the general voice of the country does admit to be everybody's business comes, in fact, to be the business of those whom the nation entrusts with national concerns.'

The fact is that no man allying himself with the Whigs could in those days look for more than tolerance from the Ministry. Burns, though practically demonstrating his attachment to the constitution, made no secret at the same time of his wish to see the government entrusted to other hands. This was enough. He proclaimed his staunchness to his old creed even at the volunteering crisis, in a letter which seems to have enclosed the election-ballads to some Whig gentleman—probably Oswald of Auchincruive, now living near Dumfries, whom Burns had lately met : *

TO [RICHARD A. OSWALD, ESQ.]

DUMFRIES, 23d April 1795.

SIR—You see the danger of patronising the rhyming tribe : you flatter the poet's vanity—a most potent ingredient in the composition of a son of rhyme—by a little notice ; and he, in return, persecutes your good nature with his acquaintance. In these days of volunteering, I have come forward with my services as poet-laureate to a highly respectable political party, of which you are a distinguished member. The enclosed are, I hope, only a beginning to the songs of triumph which you will earn in that contest. I have the honor to be, Sir, your obliged and devoted humble servant,

R. BURNS.

Shortly before this, he had written a song on Mr Oswald's beautiful young wife, and sent copies to the younger Miller of Dalswinton and to Syme.

TO PATRICK MILLER, JUNR., ESQUIRE.†

My anxiety to answer your kind epistle has delayed my writing you so long. This, you will say, is an Irishism : but it is even so. The task you obligingly assigned me of writing out some of my rhyming bagatelles for your fair English friend, I was determined to execute on a large scale ; and thus waiting for leisure to make up a Packet for you, I could not write you a line. In despair of that leisure, I now take up the pen to tell you so, by way of apology for my seeming inattention to a Gentleman whom I so highly esteem, *quo ad*, a MAN ! independently

* The letter was found among the papers of the Auchincruive family.

† Here first printed, from the MS. in the Watson Collection, National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh.

of his being a man of rank of fortune : circumstances which I trust will ever be a very trifle indeed, in my appreciation of Mankind.

Inclosed is a Song I wrote the other day. The lady I mean to compliment in it is Mrs Oswald, a woman with whom every body here is quite enchanted. I throw the little drama of my Song—Mr Oswald, seeing the evening sun shine on the habitation of his Lucy. Oswald, I am sure you must know ; else I would draw you his portrait—the portrait of an independent-minded Country Gentleman, who dares to think and act for himself : a Character, my dear Sir, which I know you must highly value ; as it is a Character in which I prophesy that you will one day make a determined, steady, respectable figure yourself.

Talking of Oswald, the Galloway interest will infallibly be overthrown at the approaching Election : this you may depend on.

When you return to the country, you will find us all *Sogers*. This, *à propos*, brings to my mind an old Scottish stanza—

There cam a soger here to stay,
He swore he wadna steer me ;
But, lang before the break o' day,
He cuddl'd, muddl'd near me.

* * * * *

I have not a moment more than just to say—God bless you !

ROBT. BURNS.

March 8th, [1795].

TO JOHN SYME, ESQ.

[DUMFRIES, May 1795.]

You know that, among other high dignities, you have the honor to be my supreme court of critical judicature, from which there is no appeal. I inclose you a song which I composed since I saw you, and I am going to give you the history of it. Do you know that among much that I admire in the characters and manners of those great folks whom I have now the honor to call my acquaintances, the Oswald family, there is nothing charms me more than Mr O.'s unconcealable attachment to that incomparable woman ? Did you ever, my dear Syme, meet with a man who owed more to the Divine Giver of all good things than Mr O. ? A fine fortune ; a pleasing exterior ; self-evident amiable dispositions ; and an ingenuous upright mind, and that informed too much beyond the usual run of young fellows of his rank and fortune : add to all this, such a woman !—but of her I shall say nothing at all, in despair of saying anything adequate : in my song, I have endeavoured to do justice to what would be his feelings on seeing, in the scene I have drawn, the habitation of his Lucy. As I am a good deal pleased with my performance, I in my first fervor thought of sending it to Mrs Oswald, but on second thoughts, perhaps what I offer as the honest incense of genuine respect might, from the well-known character of poverty and poetry, be construed into some modification or other of that

servility which my soul abhors. Do let me know, some convenient moment ere the worthy family leave town, that I *with propriety* may wait on them. In the circle of the fashionable herd, those who come either to shew their own consequence or to borrow consequence from the visit—in such a mob I will not appear : mine is a different errand.—
Yours, ROBT. BURNS.

The song enclosed was that which follows. Burns had originally, as appears from his letter to Thomson of February 7, assigned the name *Jeanie* to the heroine, having his wife, Chloris, or the daughter of the Ecelefechan postmaster in his eye. It was, of course, no unusual thing with him to make one poem serve as a compliment to more than one individual. In the transcript of the complete song he made for Thomson he again substituted *Jeanie* for *Lucy*, and the former is the heroine of the version in Johnson's *Museum*, vol. v., which is there said to have been 'written for this work by Robert Burns.'

OH, WAT YE WHA'S IN YON TOWN?

TUNE—*We'll gang nae mair to yon Town.*

Now, haply, down yon gay green shaw plantation
 She wanders by yon spreading tree ;
 How blest, ye flowers that round her blaw—
 Ye catch the glances o' her e'e !

Chorus—Oh, wat ye wha's in yon town
 Ye see the e'enin sun upon ?
 The fairest dame's in yon town
 That e'enin sun is shining on.

How blest, ye birds that round her sing
 And welcome in the blooming year !
 And doubly welcome be the Spring,
 The season to my Lucy dear !

The sun blinks blythe on yon town, shines cheerfully
 And on yon bonie braes of Ayr ;
 But my delight in yon town,
 And dearest bliss,* is Lucy fair.

* In Thomson manuscript, 'joy.'

Without my Love, not a' the charms
 O' Paradise could yield me joy ;
 But gie me Lucy in my arms,
 And welcome, Lapland's dreary sky !

give

My cave would be a Lover's bower
 Tho' raging Winter rent the air ;
 And she, a lovely little flower
 That I wad tent and shelter there.

would care for

Oh, sweet is she in yon town
 Yon sinking sun's gane down upon ;
 A fairer than's in yon town
 His setting beam ne'er shone upon.

If angry Fate is sworn my foe
 And suff'ring I am doom'd to bear ;
 I, careless, quit aught else below,
 But spare me, spare me Lucy dear !

For while life's dearest blood is warm,
 Ae thought frae her shall ne'er depart ;
 And she, as fairest is her form,
 She has the truest, kindest heart !

One

Lucy Johnston, daughter of Wynne Johnston of Hilton, was married, 23d April 1793, to Richard Alexander Oswald of Auchincruive, in the county of Ayr. Charles Kirkpatrick Sharpe averred that she was at this period 'well turned of thirty, and ten years older than her husband ; but still a charming creature.' A portrait of Mrs Oswald appears in *The Land of Burns*, where a brief notice of her, giving a different view of her age, concludes : 'Alas for beauty, fortune, affection, and hopes ! This lovely and accomplished woman had not blessed Mr Oswald above a year beyond this period when she fell into pulmonary consumption. A removal to a warmer climate was tried, in the hope of restoring health, but she died at Lisbon in January 1798, at an age little exceeding thirty.'

TO MR JAMES JOHNSON.*

[Dunelm 1793.]

MY DEAR FRIEND—Without any apology for my business, which indeed will admit of no apology, I proceed to business. I enclose you four new songs, together with a stanza of another song which you had some time ago.

'The Rob o' Dunblane' remains to be added in your fifth volume. Take it from the *Cyphrus Caledonicus*: if you have not this book, I will send you a reading of it. At the end of this set (the same with that in the *Two-Fair Miscellany*) let the old words follow—

OLD WORDS.

Lassie, lend me your brow hamp-heekie,
 And I'll lend you my thrypolin kane;
 My heekie is broken, it canna be gotten,
 And we'll gae dance the 'Rob o' Dunblane.'
 Two gae'd to the wood, to the wood, to the wood,
 Two gae'd to the wood three can hame;
 An't be na weel hobbit, weel hobbit, weel hobbit,
 An't be na weel hobbit, we'll hob it again.

Another song—'A health to Betty'—see the *Cyphrus Caledonicus*, vol. 1st.

Another song—'The earl he can o'er the craft'—for by no the best set of this see also the *Cyphrus*, vol. 1st.

Another song—'For o'er lang hiding here'—for this, see the *Cyphrus*, vol. 2d.

Another song—'Ewe lichts, Marion'—a quite different set from the one you have already published. See for this, the *Cyphrus*, vol. 2d.

Another song—'My Jackey lythe for what thou's done'—for this see also the *Cyphrus*, vol. 2d. Though, by the by, this is nearly the same air with 'And I the wyte she bairn me,' a song you already have.

Another song—'The phaneing o' her apron'—see in the *Cyphrus*, vol. 2d.

Another song—'John Ochiltree'—see in the *Cyphrus*, vol. 2d.

Another song—'Willie's rare and Willie's lay'—I do not remember if you have it already in any of your four volumes; if you have not yet inserted it, you will find it in the *Cyphrus*, vol. 2d.

Another song—'Here's a health to them that's twa'—was published some time ago by Clarke—in a single sheet.

* Here first printed from the MS. in the National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh.

Another song—'The auld man's mare's dead : ' see the air in *Aird's Selection* and the words in the *Scots Nightingale*.

'Fairly shote of her'—get the old words.

'When I was a young thing'

'I chappit at the study'

'Hazel green : ' send me the tune and I will furnish words.

'Jenny's bawbee : ' take the old verses you mention.

'Gude night and joy be wi' you a' : ' let this be your last song of all in the Collection and set it to the old words ; and after them insert my 'Gude night and joy be wi' you a' , ' which you will find in my *Poema* :

The old words are—

The night is my departing night,
The morn's the day I mann awa ;
There's no a friend or fae o' mine
But wishes that I were awa.
What I hae done, for lake o' wit,
I never, never can reca' :
I trust ye're a' my friends as yet,
Gude night and joy be wi' you a' !

1844

1844

I will overhaul Ritson, in my next ; and I have, besides, ten or a dozen songs to send you.

Two new subscribers to your *Museum*, please insert in your list and forward the volumes, four each, by the *very first* Carrier to their respective places of abode. Let them know how to remit you the cash, and it is on demand. They are—

James Gracie, Bank of Scotland's Office, Dumfries.
Archibald Richardson, Brewer, Newton Douglas.

Your book is here coming in to be a great favorite. A Singing-Master in this place has borrowed my copy and has learned ten or a dozen of them, which he sings on all occasions. As he is very popular here and has much in his power, I do not know but it would [be] sound policy in you to present him with a copy.

Inclosed is a job which I beg you will finish pretty soon. It is a Bill, as you will see, for a tavern. The Tavern-keeper, Hyslop, is a good honest fellow, and as I lie under particular obligations to him, I request that you may do it for him on the most reasonable terms. If there is any fancy that you would wish to introduce, by way of additional ornament, let me know ; but I think the simpler it is, the better. The tavern is at the sign of 'The Globe,' for which reason it must have a Globe at top. I think the model of the Bill which is enclosed is a good size ; but you are a better judge. Let me have a proof sheet, ere you finish it. I write you in a day or two. Yours ever,

R. BURNS.

TO THE SAME.*

MY DEAR FRIEND—Mr Clarke will have acquainted you with the unfortunate reasons of my long silence. When I get a little more health, you shall hear from me at large on the subject of the songs.

I am highly pleased with Hyslop's bill; only you have, in your usual luck, misspelt two words. The article 'Postages and porter' you have made 'Porterages and porter:'—pray alter that. In the article 'Pipes and Tobbacco' you have spelt Tobacco thus, 'Tobbacco:' whereas it is spelt with a single *b*, thus—'Tobacco.' When you have amended these two faults, which please do directly, throw off five hundred copies, and send them by the very first coach or fly. Farewell! my ever-valued Friend!

R. BURNS.

Wednesday Noon.

TO THE SAME.

DUMFRIES, *March 1795.*

MY DEAR FRIEND—For Hyslop's plate, many thanks for your goodness. I have made him a present of it—a present he well deserved at my hand. Thank you likewise for the copies of my Volunteer Ballad; our friend has done indeed well! 'Tis chaste and beautiful; I have not met with anything has pleased me so much. You know I am no connoisseur; but that I am an amateur will be allowed me. I return you your packet of Songs; and in a day or two, by post, expect to hear at large from yours affectionately,

R. BURNS.

We have seen Burns, during this spring, fighting for a Liberal in an election, striving to prove his substantial devotion to the British constitution by playing the volunteer soldier, and all the time working at Scottish songs. He may be shown now in another light—as a humble Excise-officer, trying, by explanations, to ward off censure for some trifling irregularity in a matter of wine-barrels.

TO MR JOHN EDGAR, EXCISE-OFFICE, EDINBURGH.

25th April 1795.

SIR—I understand that I am to incur censure by the wine-account of this district not being sent in. Allow me to state the following circumstances to you, which, if they do not apologise for, will at least extenuate, my part of the offence.

* Compared with the MS. in the University Library, Edinburgh.

The general letter was put into my hands sometime about the beginning of this month, as I was then in charge of the district, Mr Findlater being indisposed. I immediately, as far as in my power, made a survey of the wine-stocks; and where I could not personally survey, I wrote the officer of the division. In a few days more, and previous to collection-week, Mr Findlater resumed charge; and as, in the course of collection, he would have both the officers by him and the old books among his hands, it very naturally occurred to me the wine-account business would rest with him. At the close of that week, I got a note from the collector that the account-making-up was thrown on my hands. I immediately set about it; but one officer's books (James Graham of Sanquhar) not being at hand, I wrote him to send me them by first post. Mr Graham has not thought proper to pay the least attention to my request; and to-day I have sent an express for his stock-book.

This, sir, is a plain state of facts; and if I must still be thought censurable, I hope it will be considered that this officiating job being my first, I cannot be supposed to be completely master of all the etiquette of the business.

If my supposed neglect is to be laid before the Honourable Board, I beg you will have the goodness to accompany the complaint with this letter. I am, Sir, your very humble servant, ROBT. BURNS.*

It appears from Burns's recent letter to Mr Oswald that he was in the habit of submitting his verses to the judgment of his friend Syme. He had another critical friend in Collector Mitchell, who had been educated for the Church. At his death there was found in his repositories a whole sheaf of first copies of poems and songs by Burns, on which it was understood that he had been asked to give his opinion. The bundle was lost by the family, and has never since been heard of.

In 1826 Dr Robert Chambers had a conversation with John Syme of Ryedale about Burns. Syme he found to be essentially a Scottish gentleman of 'the old school'—a well-bred *bon-vivant*, with a rich fund of anecdote. 'He referred with pride and pleasure to the meetings he had had with Burns in the same room in which I now found him living (in a villa called Ryedale, on the Galloway side of the river). He expatiated on the electric flashes of the poet's eloquence at table, and on the burning satiric shafts which he was accustomed to launch at those whom he disliked or who betrayed any affectation or meanness in their behaviour. I particularly remember the old gentleman glowing

* See 'Burns and the Excise,' Vol. III., Appendix III., p. 448.

over the discomfiture of a too considerate Amphitryon, who, when entertaining himself, Burns, and some others, lingered with screw in hand over a fresh bottle of claret, which he evidently wished to be forbidden to draw—till Burns transfixed him by a comparison of his present position with that of Abraham lingering over the filial sacrifice.' Another souvenir of the poet's wit referred to a person who bored a company for a considerable time with references to the many great people he had lately been visiting :

No more of your titled acquaintances boast
 And in what lordly circles you 've been :
 An insect is still but an insect at most,
 Though it crawl on the head of a queen !

Syme, in 1829, gave the following account of the personal appearance of Burns at the time of their intimacy : 'The poet's expression varied perpetually, according to the idea that predominated in his mind ; and it was beautiful to remark how well the play of his lips indicated the sentiment he was about to utter. His eyes and lips—the first remarkable for fire, and the second for flexibility—formed at all times an index to his mind, and, as sunshine or shade predominated, you might have told, *a priori*, whether the company was to be favoured with a scintillation of wit, or a sentiment of benevolence, or a burst of fiery indignation. . . . I cordially concur with what Sir Walter Scott says of the poet's eyes. In his animated moments, and particularly when his anger was roused by instances of tergiversation, meanness, or tyranny, they were *actually like coals of living fire*.'

Burns not only respected Syme's critical capacity, but had a sincere affection for him. Sending him a dozen of porter from the Jerusalem Tavern, Dumfries, the poet accompanied the gift with a complimentary note :

Oh had the malt thy strength of mind,
 Or hops the flavour of thy wit,
 'Twere drink for first of human kind—
 A gift that even for Syme were fit !

At Syme's own house, being pressed to stay and drink more, Burns hesitated ; then taking up a tumbler, he scribbled on it :

'There's Death in the cup, sae beware !
 Nay, mair, there is danger in touching !
 But wha can avoid the fell snare ?
 The man and his wine's sae bewitching !

more

So late as the 17th December 1795, when Burns was in declining health, being invited by Syme to dine, with a promise of the best company and the best cooking, he accompanied his apology with a similar compliment :

No more of your guests, be they titled or not,
 And cookery the first in the nation :
 Who is proof to thy personal converse and wit
 Is proof to all other temptation.

Syme was undoubtedly a man of some talent, but he had the defects of a lively temperament. He was in all probability carried away by his imagination in his account of the composition of 'Scots wha hae,' as well as in a less pleasing story of which several versions have been given to the public.*

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.†

[After transcribing the song, 'Oh, wat ye wha's in you town?' the poet writes :]

Your objection to the last two stanzas of my song 'Let me in this ae night' does not strike me as just. You will take notice that my heroine is replying quite at her ease ; and when she talks of 'faithless man' she gives not the least reason to believe that she speaks from her

* It relates to a conversation on some particulars of Burns's personal conduct which took place at one of their social evenings at Ryedale. 'I might have spoken daggers,' says Mr Syme, 'but I did not mean them : Burns shook to the inmost fibre of his frame, and drew his sword-cane, when I exclaimed : "What ! wilt thou thus, and in mine own house?" The poor fellow was so stung with remorse, that he dashed himself down on the floor.' This anecdote having been unluckily communicated to the public in an article in the *Quarterly Review* by Sir Walter Scott, undue importance came to be attached to it. When the matter was rigidly investigated, nothing more could be substantiated than that Syme and Burns had one evening become serious in the midst of their merry-making—that some illusions by the one to the irregularities of the other led to some mock-heroics very suitable to the occasion, Burns touching the head of his sword-cane, as hinting that he might avenge any indignity, and Syme making a tragic start in response, with the words : 'What ! in mine own house?' It was very natural that Syme should retain but a vague recollection of the incident ; but he cannot be acquitted of culpable carelessness in allowing it to come before the world with a shade of seriousness attached to what was nothing more than a piece of rhodomontade.

† In original there is no date or post-mark. Currie gives as a date May 1795.

own experience, but merely from observation of what she has seen around her. But of all boring matters in this boring world, criticising my own works is the greatest bore.

ADDRESS TO THE WOODLARK.

TUNE—*Where 'll bonie Ann lie? or, Loch-Erroch Side.*

O stay, sweet warbling woodlark, stay,
Nor quit for me the trembling spray,
A hapless lover courts thy lay,
Thy soothing fond complaining.

Again, again that tender part,
That I may catch thy melting art;
For surely that wad touch her heart
Wha kills me wi' disdaining.

Say, was thy little mate unkind
And heard thee as the careless wind?
Oh, nocht but love and sorrow join'd
Sic notes o' woe could wauken.

waken

Thou tells of never-ending care,
Of speechless grief and dark despair:
For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair!
Or my poor heart is broken!

no more

ON CHLORIS BEING ILL.

TUNE—*Aye wakin' O.*

Can I cease to care,
Can I cease to languish,
While my darling fair
Is on the couch of anguish?

Chorus—Long, long the night,
Heavy comes the morrow,
While my soul's delight
Is on her bed of sorrow.

Every hope is fled ;
 Every fear is terror ;
 Slumber even I dread :
 Every dream is horror.

Hear me, Pow'rs Divine !
 Oh, in pity hear me !
 Take aught else of mine,
 But my Chloris spare me !

How do you like the foregoing? As to my address to the woodlark, 'Johnie Cope' is an air will do it very well. Still, whether it be the association of ideas, I cannot say, but there is a squalidity, an absence of elegance, in the sentiment and expression of that air that does not altogether suit the spirit and delicacy I have endeavoured to transfuse into the song.

As to English verses for 'Craigieburn,' you have them in Ritson's English Selection, Vol. 1st, song 22nd, by Sir Walter Raleigh, beginning

Wrong not, sweet Mistress of my heart.

'The Lammy' is an air that I do not much like. 'Laddie, lie near me' I am busy with. And, in general, have them all in my eye.

The Irish air 'Humours of Glen' is a great favorite of mine, and as, except the silly verses in 'The poor Soldier,' there are not any decent words for it, I have written for it as follows :

CALEDONIA.

TUNE—*Humours of Glen.*

Their groves o' sweet myrtle let Foreign Lands reckon,
 Where bright-beaming summers exalt the perfume ;
 Far dearer to me yon lone glen o' green breckan, bracken
 Wi' the burn stealing under the lang, yellow broom ;
 Far dearer to me are yon humble broom bowers,
 Where the blue-bell and gowan lurk, lowly, unseen ; daisy
 For there, lightly tripping amang the wild flowers,
 A-listening the linnet, oft wanders my Jean.

Tho' rich is the breeze in their gay, sunny vallies,
 And cauld, Caledonia's blast on the wave ;
 Their sweet-scented woodlands that skirt the proud palace,
 What are they ?—The haunt of the Tyrant and Slave !

The Slave's spicy forests and gold-bubbling fountains,
 The brave Caledonian views with disdain ;
 He wanders as free as the winds of his mountains,
 Save Love's willing fetters, the chains o' his Jean.

Yours,

R. B.

[Stop ! turn over.]

'Twas NA HER BONIE BLUE E'E WAS MY RUIN.

TUNE—*Laddie, lie near me.*

'Twas na her bonie blue e'e was my ruin ;
 Fair tho' she be, that was ne'er my undoing :
 'Twas the dear smile when naebody did mind us,
 'Twas the bewitching, sweet, stown glance o' kindness. stolen

Sair do I fear that to hope is denied me ; Sore
 Sair do I fear that despair maun abide me ; must
 But tho' fell fortune should fate us to sever,
 Queen shall she be in my bosom for ever !

Chloris, I'm thine wi' a passion sincerest,
 And thou hast plighted me love o' the dearest !
 And thou'rt the angel that never can alter,
 Sooner the sun in his motion would falter !

Let me hear from you.

R. B.

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, May 1795.

You must not think, my good Sir, that I have any intention to enhance the value of my gift when I say, in justice to the ingenious and worthy artist, that the design and execution of 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' is, in my opinion, one of the happiest productions of Allan's pencil. I shall be grievously disappointed if you are not quite pleased with it.

The figure intended for your portrait, I think strikingly like you, as far as I can remember the phiz. This should make the piece interesting to your family every way. Tell me whether Mrs Burns finds you out among the figures.

I cannot express the feeling of admiration with which I have read your pathetic 'Address to the Woodlark,' your elegant panegyric on Caledonia, and your affecting verses on Chloris's illness. Every repeated perusal of these gives new delight. The other song to 'Laddie, lie near me,' though not equal to these, is very pleasing. G. T.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[May 9], 1795.

HOW CRUEL ARE THE PARENTS!

ALTERED FROM AN OLD ENGLISH SONG.

TUNE—*John Anderson, my Jo.*

How cruel are the parents
 Who riches only prize,
 And to the wealthy booby
 Poor woman sacrifice :
 Meanwhile the hapless Daughter
 Has but a choice of strife ;
 To shun a tyrant Father's hate—
 Become a wretched wife.

The ravening hawk pursuing,
 The trembling dove thus flies,
 To shun impelling ruin
 Awhile her pinions tries ;
 Till of escape despairing,
 No shelter or retreat,
 She trusts the ruthless falconer
 And drops beneath his feet.

MARK YONDER POMP OF COSTLY FASHION.

TUNE—*Deil tak the Wars.*

Mark yonder pomp of costly fashion
 Round the wealthy, titled bride :
 But when compared with real passion
 Poor is all that princely pride,

What are their showy treasures ?
 What are their noisy pleasures ?
 The gay, gaudy glare of vanity and art :
 The polish'd jewel's blaze
 May draw the wond'ring gaze,
 And courtly grandeur bright
 The fancy may delight,
 But never, never can come near the heart.

But did you see my dearest Chloris
 In simplicity's array ;
 Lovely as yonder sweet opening flower is,
 Shrinking from the gaze of day.
 O then, the heart alarming,
 And all resistless charming,
 In Love's delightful fetters she chains the willing soul !
 Ambition would disown
 The world's imperial crown,
 Even Av'rice would deny
 His worshipp'd deity,
 And feel thro' every vein Love's raptures roll.

Well ! this is not amiss. You see how I answer your orders : your tailor could not be more punctual. I am just now in a high fit of poetizing, provided that the strait-jacket of Criticism don't cure me. If you can, in a post or two, administer a little of the intoxicating potion of your applause, it will raise your humble servant's frenzy to any height you want. I am at this moment 'holding high converse' with the Muses and have not a word to throw away on such a Prosaic dog as you are.

R B.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[May 1795.]

Ten thousand thanks, my dear Sir, for your elegant present ; though I am ashamed of the value of it being bestowed on a man who has not by any means merited such an instance of kindness. I have shewn it to two or three judges of the first abilities here, and they all agree with me in classing it a first-rate production. My pliz is *sae kenspeckle* [recognisable] that the very joiner's apprentice whom Mrs Burns employed to break up the parcel (I was out of town that day) knew

it at once. You may depend upon my care that no person shall have it in their power to take the least sketch from it. My most grateful compliments to Allan, that he has honored my rustic Muse so much with his masterly pencil. One strange coincidence is that the little one who is making the felonious attempt on the cat's tail is the most striking likeness of an ill-deedie, damn'd, wee, rumble-gairie hurelin of mine, whom, from that propensity to witty wickedness and manfu' mischief which, even at twa days auld, I foresaw would form the striking features of his disposition, I named 'Willie Nicol,' after a certain Friend of mine, who is one of the masters of a Grammar-school in a city which shall be nameless. Several people think that Allan's likeness of me is more striking than Nasmyth's, for which I sat to him half-a-dozen times. However, there is an artist, of very considerable merit, just now in this town, who has hit the most remarkable likeness* of what I am at this moment that I think ever was taken of any body. It is a small miniature; and as it will be in your town getting itself be-crystallized, &c., I have some thoughts of suggesting to you to prefix a vignette taken from it, to my song, 'Contented wi' little and cantie wi' mair,' in order [that] the portrait of my face and the picture of my mind may go down the stream of Time together.

Now to business. I enclose you a song of merit, to a well-known air, which is to be one of yours. It was written by a lady, and has never yet seen the press. If you like it better than the ordinary 'Woo'd and married,' or if you chuse to insert this also, you are welcome; only, return me this copy. 'The Lothian Lassie' I also enclose: the song is well known, but was never in notes before. The first part is the old tune. It is a great favorite of mine, and here I have the honor of being of the same opinion with STANDARD CLARKE. I think it would make a fine Andante ballad.

Give the enclosed epigram to my much-valued friend, Mr Cunningham; and tell him that on Wednesday I go to visit a friend of his to whom his friendly partiality in speaking of the Bard in a manner introduced me. I mean a well-known Military and Literary character, Colonel Dirom.

* See Vol. II., Appendix II. Mr E. Barrington Nash, founder of the Burns Portrait Society, denies that the miniature in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery is the portrait by Alexander Reid here (and probably also in the letter to Mrs Riddel of 29th January 1796) referred to. In an address delivered on 29th September 1896 at Glasgow, and published by Alexander Gardner, Paisley, he says: 'It is ridiculous to suppose that the youthful appearance depicted in the Watson-bequest miniature can in any way represent the emaciated looks of poor Burns in his later dolesome days at Dumfries, which is the period referred to in the correspondence.' Again, 'I might urge technical reasons why the Watson-bequest miniature is not likely to be the one referred to in the correspondence. "It will be in your town (Edinburgh) getting itself be-crystallised." The Watson miniature is painted on a much larger ivory than is required for framing in the usual oval method of the period, and, *experto crede*, no miniature-painter would risk the results of his efforts and work to a pair of scissors, as the ivory would almost of a certainty split in the process of cutting from a square to an oval.' Mr Nash claims to have discovered the Reid miniature in the possession of a gentleman in Yorkshire.

As to what you hint of my coming to Edinburgh, I know of no such arrangement. You do not tell me how you liked my last two songs. Are they condemned? Yours,
R. B.

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 13th May 1795.

It gives me great pleasure to find that you are all so well satisfied with Mr Allan's production. The chance resemblance of your little fellow, whose promising disposition appeared so very early, and suggested whom he should be named after, is curious enough. I am acquainted with that person, who is a prodigy of learning and genius, and a pleasant fellow, though no saint.

You really make me blush when you tell me you have not merited the drawing from me. I do not think I can ever repay you, or sufficiently esteem or respect you, for the liberal and kind manner in which you have entered into the spirit of the undertaking, which could not have been perfected without you. So I beg you will not make a fool of me again by speaking of obligation.

I like your last two songs very much, and am happy to find you are in such a high fit of poetising. Long may it last! Clarke has made a fine pathetic air to Mallet's superlative ballad of 'William and Margaret,' and is to give it to me, to be enrolled among the elect. G. T.

These letters refer to a very interesting picture of the 'Cotter's Saturday Night,' by the first Scottish artist of his day in that class of pictures, David Allan. As Burns persisted in his refusal to take money for his songs, Thomson tried to relieve his heavy sense of obligation by making the poet occasional presents. Once he gave Mrs Burns a shawl of a kind then novel and fashionable. He now sends an original picture by an artist of repute, whose choice of a subject must have been taken as a compliment by the poet. He had also been, as we have seen, liberal in the bestowal of copies of his first half-volume, which was the only part of his work that was published in Burns's lifetime.

The passage in the letter of Burns to Thomson, in which the poet describes the arrival of the picture—'As to what you hint of my coming to Edinburgh, I know of no such arrangement'—probably relates to some scheme for his advancement devised by his staunch friend Graham of Fintry, and somewhat in the lines of his own ideas as given in the letter to his Whig friend Heron. 'Mr Graham,' says Professor Walker, 'taking advan-

tage of the reasonable measure of official reputation which Burns possessed, had, with no less judgment than kindness, projected a plan for his benefit. Could this plan have been executed, it would in all probability have been equally effectual in providing him with the means of comfortable subsistence, with a stimulus to mental exertion. . . . The plan was to appoint him to a respectable office at Leith, with an easy duty, and with emoluments rising nearly to £200 per annum. There he would naturally have formed a stricter intimacy with his literary patrons in Edinburgh. His ambition to renew their applause would have urged him to employ his leisure in poetical compositions.' . . . Possibly, now the blast of 1792 was fairly over-blown, and Burns's official qualifications had stood the test of three more years, Mr Graham had revived his well-meant plan and entertained some hopes of carrying it into effect.

TO WILLIAM CREECH, ESQ.

ELLISLAND, 30th May 1795.

SIR—I had intended to have troubled you with a long letter, but at present the delightful sensations of an omnipotent Toothache so engross all my inner man as to put it out of my power even to write nonsense. However, as in duty bound, I approach my Bookseller with an offering in my hand—a few poetic clinches [they consisted of seventeen epigrams] and a song :—To expect any other kind of offering from the *Rhyming Tribe* would be to know them much less than you do. I do not pretend that there is much merit in these *morceaux*, but I have two reasons for sending them; *primo*, they are mostly ill-natured, so are in unison with my present feelings, while fifty troops of infernal spirits are driving post from ear to ear along my jaw-bones; and *secondly*, they are so short that you cannot leave off in the middle and so hurt my pride in the idea that you found any work of mine too heavy to get through.

I have a request to beg of you, and I not only beg of you, but conjure you—by all your wishes and by all your hopes, that the muse will spare the satiric wink in the moment of your foibles; that she will warble the song of rapture round your hymeneal couch; and that she will shed on your turf the honest tear of elegiac gratitude! Grant my request as speedily as possible.—Send me by the very first fly or coach for this place, three copies of the last edition of my poems, which place to my account.

Now, may the good things of prose and the good things of verse come among thy hands until they be filled with the *good things of this life!*
 prayeth
 ROBT. BURNS.

It is very probable that about this time and under the painful influence mentioned in his letter to Creech Burns composed his

ADDRESS TO THE TOOTHACHE.*

My curse upon your venom'd stang,	sting
That shoots my tortur'd gooms alang	gums
An' thro' my lug gies monie a twang	ear
Wi' gnawing vengeance,	
Tearing my nerves wi' bitter pang,	
Like racking engines !	

A' down my beard the slavers trickle,	
I throw the wee stools o'er the mickle,	
While round the fire the gidgets keckle,	maids—cackle
To see me loup,	jump
An', raving mad, I wish a heckle	heckling-comb
Were i' their doup !	

When fevers burn or ague freezes,
 Rheumatics gnaw or colic squeezes,
 Our neebors sympathise to ease us
 Wi' pitying moan ;
 But thee !—thou hell o' a' diseases,
 They mock our groan !

* The only manuscript of this poem known to be in existence is in the possession of Lord Blythswood. Of it Mr Scott Douglas writes (*Library Edition of the Works of Robert Burns*, vol. ii., p. 275): 'Colonel Campbell of Blythswood having intimated to our publisher that he possesses a copy of the Kilmarnock Edition (1786) with certain pieces inscribed in Burns's handwriting on its fly-leaves, we were lately favoured with an inspection of the rare volume. It is in the most perfect condition ; and although there is no presentation inscription on it, we conclude that it must have been presented by the bard to one of his distinguished patrons, because he has copied into it an early version of his farewell song "The gloomy Night is gathering fast"—the variations in which exactly correspond with the Stair MS. On the other fly-leaves he has inscribed the poem which forms the text—"Address to the Toothache"—and the handwriting quite corresponds with that of the farewell song: hence we must conclude that this is the production of the same period.' As Lord Blythswood has declined to allow me to see this volume, I am unable to say whether it is in the paper covers or has been bound, and the MS. inserted. The latter is the more probable. In any case, Mr Scott Douglas's reasoning from 'variations' and 'handwriting' cannot be considered as absolutely conclusive regarding the date when the poem was composed. The fact that Burns did not include the poem in any of his editions is more to the point.—W. W.

Of a' the num'rous human dools—
 Ill-hairsts, daft bargains, cutty-stools,*
 Or worthy frien's laid i' the mools,—†
 Sad sight to see !—
 The tricks o' knaves or fash o' fools—
 Thou bear'st the gree !

griefs
 harvests—foolish
 worry
 hast pre-eminence

Whare'er that place be priests ca' Hell,
 Whare a' the tones o' misery yell,
 An' rankèd plagues their numbers tell
 In dreadfu' raw,
 Thou, Toothache, surely bear'st the bell
 Amang them a' !

ranked
 row
 all

O thou grim, mischief-making chiel,
 That gars the notes o' discord squeel
 Till humankind aft dance a reel
 In gore a shoe-thick,
 Gie a' the faes o' Scotland's weal
 A towmond's toothache.

fellow
 makes
 twelvemonth's

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.‡

ENGLISH SONG.

FORLORN, MY LOVE, NO COMFORT NEAR.

TUNE—*Let me in this ae Night.*

Forlorn, my Love, no comfort near,
 Far, far from thee I wander here ;
 Far, far from thee, the fate severe
 At which I most repine, Love.

Chorus—Oh, wert thou, Love, but near me ;
 But near, near, near me ;
 How kindly thou wouldst chear me
 And mingle sighs with mine, Love.

* Stool of repentance.

† Friends covered up beneath the churchyard mould.

‡ This letter has no date or post-mark. In Currie's series it is placed erroneously after that which here follows it.

Around me scowls a wintry sky,
 Blasting each bud of hope and joy ;
 And shelter, shade nor home have I,
 Save in those arms of thine, Love.

Cold, alter'd friendship's cruel part,
 To poison Fortune's ruthless dart—
 Let me not break thy faithful heart,
 And say that fate is mine, Love.

But dreary though the moments fleet,
 Oh, let me think we yet shall meet !
 That only ray of solace sweet
 Can on thy Chloris shine, Love !

How do you like the foregoing? I have written it within this hour :
 so much for the *speed* of my Pegasus ; but what say you to his bottom ?

R. B.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[*Post-mark, July 3d*], 1795.

SCOTISH BALLAD.

LAST MAY A BRAW WOOR.

TUNE—*The Lothian Lassie*.

Last May a braw wooer cam down the lang glen,	handsome
And sair wi' his love he did deave me ;	—long valley
I said there was naething I hated like men,	deafen, or bore
The deuce gae wi' him, to believe me, believe me !	nothing
The deuce gae wi' him, to believe me !	

He spak o' the darts in my bonie black een,	eyes
And vow'd for my love he was dying ;	
I said he might die when he liked—for Jean—	
The Lord forgi'e me for lying, for lying !	
The Lord forgi'e me for lying !	

A well-stocked mailin, himsel for the laird,	farm—proprietor
And marriage affhand, were his proffers :	
I never loot on that I kend it, or car'd,	allowed—knew
But thought I might hae waur offers, waur offers ;	worse
But thought I might hae waur offers.	

But what wad ye think ? in a fortnight or less
 The deil tak his taste to gae near her !
 He up the Gateslack to my black cousin Bess,
 Guess ye how, the jad ! I could bear her, could bear her ! jade
 Guess ye how, the jad ! I could bear her !

But a' the niest week as I petted wi' care, next
 I gaed to the tryste o' Dalgarnock ; fair
 And wha but my fine, fickle lover was there,
 I glowr'd as I 'd seen a warlock, a warlock, stared
 I glowr'd as I 'd seen a warlock. —wizard, bogle

But owre my left shouther I ga'e him a blink, over—gave—look
 Least neebours might say I was saucy :
 My wooer he caper'd as he 'd been in drink,
 And vow'd I was his dear lassie, dear lassie ;
 And vow'd I was his dear lassie.

I spiered for my cousin fu' couthy and sweet, asked—full kindly
 Gin she had recover'd her hearin',
 And how her new shoon fit her auld shachl't feet ; shoes
 But, heavens ! how he fell a-swearin', a-swearin' ; —misshapen
 But, heavens ! how he fell a-swearin'.

He begged, for Gudesake ! I wad be his wife,
 Or else I wad kill him wi' sorrow :
 So, e'en to preserve the poor body in life,
 I think I maun wed him to-morrow, to-morrow ; must
 I think I maun wed him to-morrow.

F R A G M E N T.

TUNE—*The Caledonian Hunt's Delight.*

Why, why tell thy lover
 Bliss he never must enjoy ?
 Why, why undeceive him
 And give all his hopes the lie ?

O why, while fancy, raptured, slumbers,
 Chloris, Chloris all the theme,
 Why, why wouldst thou cruel
 Wake thy lover from his dream? *

Such is the damned peculiarity of the rhythm of this air, that I find it impossible to make another stanza to suit it.

'This is no my ain house' puzzles me a good deal. In fact, I think to change the old rhythm of the first, or chorus part of the tune will have a good effect. I would have it something like the gallop of the following :

SONG.

TUNE—*This is no my ain house.*

I see a form, I see a face,
 Ye weel may wi' the fairest place :
 It wants to me the witching grace,
 The kind love that's in her e'e.

Chorus—O this is nae my ain Body,
 Fair tho' the Body be :
 O weel ken I my ain Body,
 Kind love is in her e'e.

sweetheart

She's blooming, gracefu', straight and tall,
 And lang has had my heart in thrall ;
 And ay it chains my very soul,
 The kind love that's in her e'e.

I am at present quite occupied with the charming sensations of the Toothache ; so have not a word to spare. I know your letters come post-free to you, so I trouble you with the inclosed, which, as it is a business letter, please cause to be delivered at first convenience. Yours,

R. BURNS.

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

3d June 1795.

MY DEAR SIR—Your English verses to 'Let me in this ae night' are tender and beautiful ; and your ballad to the 'Lothian Lassie' is a

* A marginal note in Thomson's hand on the MS. runs : 'Instead of this poor song I will take the one "Ye Banks and Braes o' bonie Doon" for the Air here mentioned. But I propose attaching this to some other Air, if I find one to suit it.'

master-piece for its humour and naïveté. The fragment for the 'Caledonian Hunt' is quite suited to the original measure of the air, and as it plagues you so, the fragment must content it. I would rather, as I said before, have had bacchanalian words, had it so pleased the poet; nevertheless, for what we have received, Lord, make us thankful!

G. T.

Thomson objected to the introduction of the word Gateslack, and also that of Dalgarnock, in the song of the 'Braw Wooer,' as printed at p. 230.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON

[Post-mark, August 3,] 1795.

Your objection is just, as to the verse of my song ['Forlorn, my Love']. I hope the following alteration will please you.

Cold, alter'd friends with cruel art
Poisoning fell Misfortune's dart--
Let me not break thy faithful heart,
And say that fate is mine, love.

Did I mention to you that I wish to alter the first line of the English songs to 'Leiger m' choss,' alias 'The Quaker's Wife,' from

Thine am I, my faithful Fair,

to—

Thine am I, my Chloris fair?

If you neglect the alteration, I call on all the NINE, conjunctly and severally, to anathematise you!

In 'Whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad,' the iteration of that line is tiresome to my ear. Here goes the old first four lines of every stanza, and then follows what I think is an improvement—

O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad;
O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad;
Tho' father, and mother, and a' should gae mad,
O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad.

Alter to—

O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad;
O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad;
Though father, and mother, and a' should gae mad,
Thy Jeany will venture wi' ye, my lad.

In fact, a fair Dame, at whose shrine I, the Priest of the Nine, offer up the incense of Parnassus; a Dame whom the Graces have attired in witchcraft, and whom the Loves have armed with lightning—a Fair One, *herself the heroine of the song*, insists on the amendment; and dispute her commands, if you dare!

'Gateslack'—the word you object to in my last ballad, is positively the name of a particular place, a kind of passage up among the Lowther Hills, on the confines of this County. 'Dalgarnock' is also the name of a romantic spot, near the Nith, where are still a ruined church and a burial-place. However, let the line run 'He up the lang loan,' &c.

'This is nae my ain Body' alter into 'This is no my ain lassie.'

THIS IS NO MY AIN LASSIE.

TUNE—*This is no my ain house.*

I see a form, I see a face,
Ye weel may wi' the fairest place :
It wants, to me, the witching grace,
The kind love that's in her e'e.

Chorus—O this is no my ain lassie,
Fair tho' the lassie be :
O weel ken I my ain lassie,
Kind love is in her e'e.

She's bonie, blooming, straight and tall,
And lang has had my heart in thrall ;
And ay it charms my very saul, soul
The kind love that's in her e'e.

A thief sae pawkie is my Jean sly
To steel a blink, by a' unseen ; glance
But gleg as light are lover's e'en, quick
When kind love is in the e'e.

It may escape the courtly sparks,
It may escape the learnèd clerks ;
But weel the watching lover marks
The kind love that's in her e'e.

Do you know that you have roused the torpidity of Clarke at last ? He has requested me to write three or four songs for him, which he is to set to music himself. The inclosed sheet contains two songs for him : the sheet please to present to my very much valued friend whose name is at the bottom of the sheet. I will write him a long letter one of

these days. I inclose the sheet both for your inspection and that you may copy off the song 'O bonie was yon rosy brier.' I do not know whether I am right; but that song pleases me; and as it is extremely probable that Clarke's newly-roused celestial spark will be soon smothered in the fogs of Indolence, if you like the song, it will go *as Scottish verses* to the air 'I wish my love was in a mire;' and poor Mr Erskine's English lines may follow.

I inclose you a 'For a' that and a' that' which was never in print: it is a much superior song to mine. I have been told that it was composed by a lady.

R. B.

In this letter was enclosed a separate sheet containing the following pieces for Cunningham. The poet requested Thomson to see the sheet into that gentleman's hands.

TO MR ALEXANDER CUNNINGHAM.

SCOTISH SONG.

Now spring has clad the grove in green
 And strewed the lea wi' flowers:
 The furrow'd, waving corn is seen
 Rejoice in fostering showers.
 While ilka thing in Nature join every
 Their sorrows to forego,
 O why thus all alone are mine
 The weary steps o' woe.

The trout within yon wimpling burn rippling
 That glides—a silver dart,
 And safe beneath the shady thorn
 Defies the angler's art:
 My life was ance that careless stream, once
 That wanton trout was I;
 But Love, wi' unrelenting beam,
 Has scorh'd my fountains dry.

The little floweret's peaceful lot
 In yonder cliff that grows—
 Which, save the linnet's flight, I wot,
 Nae ruder visit knows—

Was mine ; till Love has o'er me past
 And blighted a' my bloom,
 And now beneath the withering blast
 My youth and joy consume.

The waken'd lav'rock warbling springs,
 And climbs the early sky,
 Winnowing blythe her dewy wings
 In morning's rosy eye ;
 As little reekt I sorrow's power,
 Until the flowery snare
 Of witching love, in luckless hour,
 Made me the thrall o' care.

lark

O had my fate been Greenland snows,
 Or Afric's burning zone,
 Wi' man and nature leagu'd my foes,
 So Peggy ne'er I'd known !
 The wretch whase doom is, 'hope nae mair,'
 What tongue his woes can tell ;
 Within whase bosom save Despair
 Nae kinder spirits dwell.

whose

O BONIE WAS YON ROSY BRIER.

TUNE—*I wish my Love were in a mire.*

O bonie was yon rosy brier
 That blooms sae far frae haunt o' man ;
 And bonie she, and ah, how dear !
 It shaded frae the e'enin sun.

Yon rosebuds in the morning dew
 How pure, amang the leaves sae green ;
 But purer was the lover's vow
 They witness'd in their shade yestreen.

All in its rude and prickly bower
 That crimson rose how sweet and fair ;
 But love is far a sweeter flower
 Amid life's thorny path o' care.

The pathless wild, and wimpling burn,
 Wi' Chloris in my arms, be mine ;
 And I the world, nor wish, nor scorn,
 Its joys and griefs alike resign.

WRITTEN ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A COPY OF THE LAST
 EDITION OF MY POEMS, PRESENTED TO THE LADY WHOM,
 IN SO MANY FICTITIOUS REVERIES OF PASSION, BUT WITH
 THE MOST ARDENT SENTIMENTS OF REAL FRIENDSHIP, I
 HAVE SO OFTEN SUNG UNDER THE NAME OF CHLORIS :

'TO CHLORIS.' [See *ante*, p. 156].

Une bagatelle de l'amitié.

COILA.

3d August, 1795.

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 3d August 1795.

MY DEAR SIR—This will be delivered to you by a Dr Brianton, who has read your works and pants for the honour of your acquaintance. I do not know the gentleman ; but his friend, who applied to me for this introduction, being an excellent young man, I have no doubt he is worthy of all acceptance.

My eyes have just been gladdened, and my mind feasted, with your last packet—full of pleasant things indeed. What an imagination is yours ! it is superfluous to tell you that I am delighted with all the three songs, as well as with your elegant and tender verses to Chloris.

I am sorry you should be induced to alter 'O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad,' to the prosaic line, 'Thy Jeanie will venture wi' ye, my lad.' I must be permitted to say that I do not think the latter either reads or sings so well as the former. I wish, therefore, you would in my name petition the charming Jeanie, whoever she be, to let the line remain unaltered.

I should be happy to see Mr Clarke produce a few airs to be joined to your verses. Everybody regrets his writing so very little, as everybody acknowledges his ability to write well. Pray, was the resolution formed

coolly, before dinner, or was it a midnight vow, made over a bowl of punch with the bard?

I shall not fail to give Mr Cunningham what you have sent him.

P.S.—The lady's 'For a' that, and a' that,' is sensible enough, but no more to be compared to yours than I to Hercules. G. T.

To the summer of this year Dr Currie assigns an

INSCRIPTION

FOR AN ALTAR TO INDEPENDENCE AT KERROUGHTREE, THE SEAT OF MR HERON.

Thou of an independent mind,
 With soul resolved, with soul resigned;
 Prepar'd Power's proudest frown to brave,
 Who wilt not be, nor have, a slave,
 Virtue alone who dost revere,
 Thy own reproach alone dost fear:
 Approach this shrine and worship here.

The following letter to the father of Mrs Whelpdale is of interest solely as showing the exact terms on which Burns and his wife were with the Lorimers:

TO MR WM. LORIMER, SENIOR, FARMER.

MY DEAR SIR—I called for you yester-night, both at your own house, and at your favorite lady's—Mrs Hyslop of the Globe—but could not find you. I want you to dine with me to-day. I have two honest Midlothian Farmers * with me, who have travelled threescore miles to renew old friendship with the poet; and I promise you a pleasant party, a plateful of hotch-potch and a bottle of good sound port.

Mrs Burns desired me yesternight to beg the favor of Jeany to come and partake with her; and she was so obliging as to promise that she would. Jeany and you, [Mr Syme, Dr Maxwell and Dr Mundell] are all the people, besides my Edinburgh friends, whom I wish to see; and if you can come I shall take it very kind.—Yours,

ROBT. BURNS.

Dinner at three.

* The next letter shows that Cleghorn was one of these farmers.

TO MR ROBERT CLEGHORN, FARMER,
SAUGHTON, NEAR EDINBURGH.

DUMFRIES, 21st Aug. 1795.

MY DEAR CLEGHORN—Inclosed you have Clarke's 'Gaffer Gray.' I have not time [to take a] copy of it, so, when you have taken a copy for yourself, please return me the original. I need not caution you against giving copies to any other person. 'Peggy Ramsay,' I shall expect to find in Gaffer Gray's company when he returns to Dumfries.

I intended to have taken the advantage of the frank and given you a long letter; but cross accident has detained me until the Post is just going. Pray, has Mr Wright got the better of his fright? and how is Mr Allan? I hope you got all safe home. Dr Maxwell and honest John Syme beg leave to be remembered to you all. They both speak in high terms of the acquisition they have made to their acquaintance. Did Thomson meet you on Sunday? If so, you would have a world of conversation. Mrs Burns joins in thanks for your obliging, *very obliging* visit. Yours ever,
R. BURNS.

P.S.—Did you ever meet with the following, 'Todlin Hame,' by late Mr M'Culloch of Airdwell, Galloway?

Allusion has several times been made to the poet's hatred of the Duke of Queensberry. This nobleman's career on the turf had gained him an unlovely notoriety. Succeeding to the dukedom in 1773, he did not, with years and honours, acquire public respect. To this heartless grandee, who resided almost constantly in London, was committed the chief territorial influence in Dumfriesshire, with all its political consequences. Country gentlemen bowed to the yoke; but the exciseman of Dumfries—delighted at all times to

'Bare the mean heart that lurks beneath a star'—

omitted no opportunity of giving the powerful sybarite a lash
It was of 'his Grace' Burns wrote:—

How shall I sing Drumlanrig's Grace—
Discarded remnant of a race
Once great in martial story?
His forbears' virtues all contrasted—
The very name of Douglas blasted—
His that inverted glory!

Hate, envy, oft the Douglas bore ;
 But he has superadded more
 And sunk them in contempt !
 Follies and crimes have stained the name,
 But, Queensberry, thine the virgin claim,
 From aught that's good exempt !

A satire,* founded on Queensberry's desertion of the king in 1789, has been lately recovered :

ON THE DUKE OF QUEENSBERRY.

As I cam down the banks o' Nith
 And by Glenriddel's ha', man,
 There I heard a piper play
 'Turn-coat Whigs, awa, man !'

Drumlanrig's towers hae tint the powers lost
 That kept the lands in awe, man :
 The eagle's dead, and in his stead
 We've gotten a hoody-craw, man.

The turn-coat Duke his King forsook
 When his back was at the wa', man :
 The rattan ran wi' a' his clan rat
 For fear the hoose should fa', man.

The lads about the banks o' Nith,
 They trust his Grace for a', man :
 But he'll sair them as he sair'd the King — serve
 Turn tail and rin awa, man.

In 1795 the duke stripped his domains of Drumlanrig, in Dumfriesshire, and Neidpath, in Peeblesshire, of all the wood fit to be cut, in order to furnish a dowry for the Countess of Yarmouth, whom he supposed to be his daughter, and to whom George Selwyn, the celebrated wit, also left a fortune, under the (probably equally mistaken) impression that she was his. Wordsworth avenged on the 'degenerate Douglas' his leaving old Neid-

* From the MS. in a volume (from the Library of Riddel of Glenriddel) now in the possession of the Earl of Rosebery.

path so 'beggared and outraged.' The vindication of Nature in the case of Drumlanrig would be a pleasing duty to Burns. In one of his rides, at all events, he is said to have inscribed the following verses on the back of a window-shutter in an inn or toll-house near the scene of the devastations :

VERSES ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE
WOODS NEAR DRUMLANRIG.

As on the banks o' wandering Nith
 Ae smiling simmer-morn I strayed, One—summer
 And traced its bonny howes and haughs, hollows—holms
 Where linties sang and lambkins played, linnets
 I sat me down upon a craig rocky knoll
 And drank my fill o' fancy's dream,
 When from the eddying deep below
 Uprose the genius of the stream :

Dark, like the frowning rock, his brow,
 And troubled, like his wintry wave,
 And deep, as sighs the boding wind sighs, moans
 Amang his caves, the sigh he gave—
 'And came ye here, my son,' he cried,
 'To wander in my birken shade? birchen
 To muse some favourite Scottish theme
 Or sing some favourite Scottish maid?

'There was a time, it's nae lang syne, ago
 Ye might hae seen me in my pride,
 When a' my banks sae bravely saw
 Their woody pictures in my tide ;
 When hanging beech and spreading elm
 Shaded my stream sae clear and cool ;
 And stately oaks their twisted arms
 Threw broad and dark across the pool ;

'When, glinting through the trees, appeared
 The wee white cot aboon the mill, above
 And peacefu' rose its ingle reek chimney smoke
 That slowly curlèd up the hill.

But now the cot is bare and cauld,	cold
Its branchy shelter's lost and gane,	
And scarce a stinted birk is left	birch
To shiver in the blast its lane.'	alone

'Alas !' said I, 'whiat ruefu' chance	
Has twined ye o' your stately trees ?	stripped
Has laid your rocky bosom bare,	
Has stripped the cleeding o' your braes ?	clothing —banks
Was it the bitter eastern blast	
That scatters blight in early spring ?	
Or was 't the wil'fire scorched their boughs	lightning
Or canker-worm wi' secret sting ?'	

'Nae eastlin blast,' the sprite replied,	
'It blew na here sae fierce and fell,	
And on my dry and halesome banks	healthful
Nae canker-worms get leave to dwell :	
Man ! cruel man !' the genius sighed—	
As through the cliffs he sank him down—	
'The worm that gnawed my bonny trees,	
That reptile wears a ducal crown.'*	

The next letter, to the Provost of Dumfries, is of special interest, as indicating that Burns took a keen interest in the affairs of the town.

TO DAVID STAIG, ESQ., DUMFRIES.

I know, Sir, that anything which relates to the Burgh of Dumfries's interests will engage your readiest attention, so shall make no apology for this letter. I have been for some time turning my attention to a branch of your good town's revenue, where, I think, there is much to amend : I mean the 'Twa Pennies' on Ale. The Brewers and Victuallers

* This piece was first printed in the *Scots Magazine* for February 1803, with a note to the effect that the verses were found, in Burns's handwriting, pasted on the back of a window-shutter in an inn or tollhouse near the scene of desolation. It has been conjectured that this poem, Burns's authorship of which was doubted by Allan Cunningham in spite of internal evidence in its favour, was written in 1791, when, as the Election Ballads show, the poet was very bitter against the Duke. In support of this view the courteous letter Burns wrote to the Duke in 1793 has been cited. But a fresh access of detestation in 1795, caused by the circumstances mentioned in the text, is sufficient to account for a new poem embodying it.

within the jurisdiction pay accurately ; but three Common Brewers in the Bridgend, whose consumpt is almost entirely in Dumfries, pay nothing ; Annan Brewer, who daily sends in great quantities of ale, pays nothing : because in both cases Ale Certificates are never asked for : and of all the English Ale, Porter, &c., scarcely any of it pays. For my part, I never recorded an Ale Certificate in Dumfries, and I know most of the other Officers are in the same predicament. It makes no part of our official duty, and besides, until it is universally assessed, on all Dealers, it strikes me as injustice to assess one. I know that our Collector has a per-centage on the Collection : but as it is no great object to him he gives himself no concern as to what is *brought in* to the town. The Supervisor would suit you better. He is an abler and a keener man and, what is all-important in the business, such is his official influence over, and power among his Officers, that were he to signify that such was his wish, not a 'pennie' would be left uncollected. It is by no means the case with the Collector. The Officers are not so immediately among his hands, and they would not pay the same attention to his mandates.

Your brewers here, the Richardsons, one of whom, Gabriel,* I survey, pay annually in 'twapennies,' about thirty pounds, and they complain, with great justice, of the unfair balance against them, in their competition with the Bridgend, Annan and English Traders. As they are respectable characters, both as Citizens and Men of Business, I am sure they will meet with every encouragement from the Magistracy of Dumfries. For their sakes partly I have interested myself in this business, but still much more on account of many obligations which I feel myself to lie under to Mr Staig's civility and goodness.

Could I be of the smallest service in any thing he has at heart, it would give me great pleasure. I have been at some pains to ascertain what your annual loss on this business may be, and I have reason to think it may amount fully to one third of what you at present receive.

These crude hints, Sir, are entirely for your private use. I have by no means any wish to take a sixpence from Mr Mitchell's income ; nor do I wish to serve Mr Findlater : I wish to shew any attempt I can, to do any thing that might declare with what sincerity I have the honor to be, Sir, your obliged humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

Friday Noon.

P.S.—A variety of other methods might be pointed out, and will easily occur to your reflection on the subject.

R. B.†

The Provost was so impressed by Burns's opinion that he took the advice of counsel. That being identical with the poet's, the

* Gabriel Richardson, one of the most popular citizens of Dumfries while Burns lived in it, became Provost in 1801. He died in 1820 at the age of sixty-one.

† This letter was first published in the *Dumfries Courier* in 1858. We have collated it with the MS.—now in the Burns Monument at Kilmarnock.

Town Council took the matter up in 1796, and singularly enough only four days before the poet's death. The impost was agreed to and levied till ended by the Reform Bill of 1832.

Burns had a pleasant meeting this autumn with an old acquaintance, Mr Pattison of Kelvin Grove, brother of a friend who had helped him in connection with the first Edinburgh edition of the poems. Mr Pattison passed through Dumfries on his way to visit his brother, a clergyman, residing in that county; he was accompanied by his son, who was then a boy, and a groom, all three travelling on horseback. The son, John Pattison, who afterwards resided at Carnbroe, Lanarkshire, told a story of the meeting. When they rode up to the inn, a gentleman was seen standing on the stairs, whom Mr Pattison at once hailed as Burns. 'He who had remained motionless till now rushed down the steps and caught my father by the hand, saying: "Mr Pattison, I am delighted to see you here; how do you do?" I need not say this was our immortal bard. My father continued: "Burns, I hope you will dine with me at four o'clock." "Too happy, sir," replied the poet. "Then, may I beg of you to go with my compliments to your friend Dr Maxwell, and say I will be glad if he will do us the pleasure of joining us?" At the hour named, my father sat down at the head of the table, Dr Maxwell at the foot, and the grammar-school boy opposite Burns. Upwards of half a century has passed away; but the recollection of that day is as fresh and green in my memory as if the events recorded had occurred yesterday. It was, in fact, a new era in my existence. I had never before sat after dinner; but now I was chained to my chair till late at night, or rather early in the morning. Both Dr Maxwell and my father were highly-gifted, eloquent men. The poet was in his best vein. I can never forget the animation and glorious intelligence of his countenance, the rich, deep tones of his musical voice, and those matchless eyes, which absolutely appeared to flash fire and stream forth rays of living light. It was not conversation I heard; it was an outburst of noble sentiment, brilliant wit, and a flood of sympathy and good-will to fellowmen. Burns repeated many verses that had never seen the light, chiefly political; no impure or obscene idea was uttered, or I believe thought of: it was altogether an intellectual feast. A lofty, pure, and transcendent genius alone could have made so deep and lasting

an impression on a mere boy, who had read nothing, and who does not remember to have heard Burns named till that day.'*

TO MRS WALTER RIDDEL, HALLEATHS.

[August 1795.]

I have perused with great pleasure your elegiac verses. In two or three instances I mark inequalities, rather than faults. A line that in an ordinary mediocre production might pass, not only without censure but with applause, in a brilliant composition glares in all its native halting inferiority. The last line of the second stanza I dislike most. If you cannot mend it (*I cannot, after beating my brains to pap*), I would almost leave out the whole stanza. A *Dieu je vous recommande*. R. B.

TO THE SAME.

[DUMFRIES, August 1795.]

I think there is little doubt but that your interest, if judiciously directed, may procure a Tide-waiter's place for your protégé, Shaw; but alas, that is doing little for him! Fifteen pounds per annum is the salary; and the perquisites, in some lucky stations, such as Leith, Glasgow, Greenock, may be ten more; but in such a place as this, for instance, they will hardly amount to five. The appointment is not in the EXCISE, but in the CUSTOMS. The way of getting appointed is just the application of GREAT FOLKS to the Commissioners of the Customs: the Almanack will give you their names. The Excise is a superior object, as the salary is fifty per annum. You mention that he has a family: if he has more than three children, he cannot be admitted as an Excise Officer. To apply there, is the same business as at the Customs. Garthland, if you can command his sincere zeal in the cause, is, I think, able to do either the one or the other. Find out, among your acquaintances, who are the private friends of the Commissioners of the particular BOARD at which you wish to apply, and interest them—the more, the better. The Commissioners of both Boards are people quite in the fashionable circle, and must be known to many of your friends. I was going to mention some of your Female acquaintance who might give you a lift, but, on recollection, your interest with the WOMEN is, I believe, a sorry business. So much the better! 'tis God's judgment upon you for making such a despotic use of your sway over the MEN. —You a Republican! You have an Empire over us; and you know it too: but the Lord's holy name be praised, you have something of the same propensity to get giddy (intoxicated is not a lady's word) with power;

* This extract is given, with some authorised alterations of phrase, from a letter published anonymously by John Pattison in the *Glasgow Citizen*, January 1848.

and a devilish deal of aptitude to the same blind, undistinguishing FAVORITISM which makes other Despots less dangerous to the welfare and repose of mankind than they otherwise might be.

So much for scolding you.

I have perused your MSS. with a great deal of pleasure. I have taken the liberty to make a few marks with my pencil, which I trust you will pardon.—Farewell !

R. BURNS.

In the autumn of 1795 Burns suffered deeply from the protracted illness of his infant daughter, who at length died so far away from him that he could not himself lay her in her grave.* He was indeed so prostrated that 'all literary business was suspended.'

TO MRS WALTER RIDDEL, HALLEATHS.

DUMFRIES, September 1795.

MADAM—A severe domestic misfortune has put all literary business out of my head for some time past. Now I begin to resume my wonted studies. I am much in correspondence in your debt : I shall pay it soon. Clarke's Sonatas are of no use to me and I beg you will keep them.

That you, my Friend, may never experience such a loss as mine, sincerely prays

R. B.

According to Currie, the poet's health had for upwards of a year before his death—that is, from early summer of 1795—begun to give way. A friend who called on him in the spring of that year found him ailing. He rubbed his shoulders slightly, and said : 'I am beginning to feel as if I were soon to be an old man.' But, indeed, we have his own testimony in a letter to Mrs Dunlop, of 25th June 1794, that he was even then threatened with a punishment for the follies of his youth, in the form of a flying gout, though he hoped that his medical friends were mistaken in their diagnosis. According to Dr Currie,† the poet

* This child, Elizabeth Riddel (born 21st November 1792), died and was buried at Mauchline.

† Currie's assertions are dealt with subsequently in the essay on the character and genius of the poet. Here it may be mentioned, on the authority of a letter written by Mr Thomas Thorburn to Dr Robert Chambers, that Crombie, a Dumfries friend of Burns, inquired of him shortly before his death as to the truth of the 'accidental complaint' story, and that Burns indignantly denied it. Currie undoubtedly deserves censure for having made, in public, charges against the moral character of Burns, which from their nature can only be discussed *in camera*.

was confined with an 'accidental complaint,' from October 1795 till the January following. Professor Walker,* on the other hand, says he passed two days with him in November, and observed no unfavourable change in his looks, his spirits, or his appetite.

'Circumstances,' says Walker, 'having at that time led me to Scotland after an absence of eight years, during which my intercourse with Burns had been almost suspended, I felt myself strongly prompted to visit him. For this purpose I went to Dumfries, and called upon him early in the forenoon. I found him in a small house of one storey.† He was sitting on a window-seat reading, with the doors open, and the family arrangements going on in his presence, and altogether without that appearance of snugness which a student requires. After conversing with him for some time, he proposed a walk, and promised to conduct me through some of his favourite haunts. We accordingly quitted the town, and wandered a considerable way up the beautiful banks of the Nith. Here he gave me an account of his latest productions, and repeated some satirical ballads which he had composed, to favour one of the candidates at the last borough election.‡ . . . He repeated also his fragment of an *Ode to Liberty*§ with marked and peculiar energy, and showed a disposition, which, however, was easily repressed, to throw out peculiar remarks of the same nature with those for which he had been reprehended. On finishing our walk, he passed some time with me at the inn, and I left him early in the evening, to make another visit at some distance from Dumfries.

'On the second morning after,' continues the professor, 'I returned with a friend, who was acquainted with the poet, and we found him ready to pass a part of the day with us at the inn. On this occasion, I did not think him quite so interesting

* It has very naturally been assumed, that on account of the allusions made in some of the last letters Burns ever wrote to the character of his illness in the end of 1795, that Walker in reality visited Burns in 1794. On the other hand, it is barely possible that Burns recovered sufficiently though only temporarily, in 1795, to receive an old friend. In any case it is but fair to Walker to reproduce his narrative as he himself gave it.

† Here Walker is undoubtedly in error. The house is one of two floors.

‡ Possibly the ballads on the Kirkeudbright election; *vide supra*.

§ We have a fragment of this poem in a letter of the poet to Mrs Dunlop, dated June 25, 1794.

as he had appeared at his outset. His conversation was too elaborate, and his expression weakened by a frequent endeavour to give it artificial strength. He had been accustomed to speak for applause in the circles which he frequented, and seemed to think it necessary, in making the most common remark, to depart a little from the ordinary simplicity of language, and to couch it in something of epigrammatic point. In his praise and censure, he was so decisive as to render a dissent from his judgment difficult to be reconciled with the laws of good-breeding. His wit was not more licentious than is unhappily too venial in higher circles, though I thought him rather unnecessarily free in the avowal of his excesses. Such were the clouds by which the pleasures of the evening were partially obscured, but frequent coruscations of genius were visible between them. When it began to grow late, he showed no disposition to retire, but called for fresh supplies of liquor with a freedom which might be excusable as we were in an inn, and no condition had been distinctly made, though it might easily have been inferred, had the inference been welcome, that he was to consider himself as our guest; nor was it till he saw us worn out that he departed, about three in the morning. . . . Upon the whole, I found this last interview not quite so gratifying as I had expected; although I had discovered in his conduct no errors which I had not seen in men who stand high in the favour of society, or sufficient to account for the mysterious insinuations which I had heard against his character. He on this occasion drank freely without being intoxicated, a circumstance from which I concluded, not only that his constitution was still unbroken, but that he was not addicted to solitary cordials; for if he had tasted liquor in the morning he must have easily yielded to the excess of the evening.' The grotesque *de haut en bas* style in which Walker here treats Burns needs no comment, and has been mercilessly criticised by John Wilson. The poet, in his own time, was too apt to be regarded in this manner by well-wishers, as well as by enemies.

It was probably at the end of the year that the poet addressed a short rhymed epistle to Collector John Mitchell, asking the loan (or the return) of a guinea, and bidding farewell to folly 'for ance and aye.'

TO COLLECTOR MITCHELL.

Friend of the Poet, tried and leal,	loyal
Wha wanting thee might beg or steal ;	
Alake, alake, the meikle Deil	alas !—big
Wi' a' his witches	
Are at it, skelpin jig an' reel	rattling
In my poor pouches !	pockets

I modestly fu' fain wad hint it,	would
That One-pound-one, I sairly want it ;	
If wi' the hizzie down ye sent it,	servant-girl
It would be kind ;	
And while my heart wi' life-blood dunted	throbbed
I'd bear 't in mind !	

So may the Auld Year gang out moanin	go
To see the New come laden, groaning	
Wi' double plenty o'er the loanin	road
To thee and thine :	
Domestic peace and comforts crownin	
The hale design !	whole

POSTSCRIPT.

Ye've heard this while how I've been licket,	struck
And by fell Death was nearly nicket ?	cut off
Grim loon ! He got me by the fecket	waistcoat
And sair me sheuk ;	sore—shook
But by gude-luck I lap a wicket	good-luck—leaped
And turn'd a neuk.	corner

But by that health, I've got a share o' 't !	
And by that life, I'm promised mair o' 't !	
My hale and weel, I'll take a care o' 't	health—prosperity
A tentier way :	more careful
Then farewell Folly, hide and hair o' 't,	
For ance and aye !	

CHAPTER IV.

DUMFRIES (JANUARY TO JULY 26, 1796).



THE new year made a most unpropitious opening, owing largely to the failure of the previous harvest. Meetings, riots, and evidences of general discontent alarmed the ministry, and towards the close of the year it was resolved to place some additional restrictions upon the liberty of speech and assembly. The result was the passing of the celebrated Sedition Bill. The broken remnants of the Whig party were greatly exasperated by the measure, and notable among the protests against it was that made at a public meeting held in the Circus—afterwards the Adelphi Theatre—in Edinburgh, Henry Erskine, then Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, presiding. The Tory majority of the Scottish bar, seeing their Dean thus engaged, as they said, in ‘agitating the giddy and ignorant multitude, and cherishing such humours and dispositions as directly tend to overturn the laws,’ resolved, at the approaching annual election to the deanship, to oppose Erskine’s reappointment. It was a most painful step for them to take, Erskine being a favourite with all parties and classes; but they were resolute to follow the course which they believed public duty dictated. Throughout the whole of December a newspaper war raged upon the subject, and ‘Parliament House’ had never known a more agitating crisis. At length, on the 12th of January 1796, the election took place, when Dundas, the Lord Advocate, was preferred to Erskine by a majority of 123 to 38 votes. The deposed dean was deeply mortified. In the vexation

of the moment, he went that night to his door, and hewed off from it with a coal-axe the brass-plate which bore the title he had lost. The liberals throughout the country heard the news with a bitterness beyond all common measure. It was not likely that Burns would allow the slight put upon his friend to pass, especially as a Dundas was the instrument. He circulated the following ballad on the affair :

THE DEAN OF THE FACULTY.

A NEW BALLAD.

TUNE—*The Dragon of Wantley.*

Dire was the hate at Old Harlaw
 That Scot to Scot did carry ;
 And dire the discord Langside saw
 For beauteous, hapless Mary.
 But Scot to Scot ne'er met so hot
 Or were more in fury seen, Sir,
 Than 'twixt Hal and Bob for the famous job,
 Who should be the Faculty's Dean, Sir.

This Hal for genius, wit and lore
 Among the first was number'd ;
 But pious Bob, 'mid learning's store
 Commandment the Tenth remember'd.
 Yet simple Bob the victory got
 And won his heart's desire :
 Which shows that Heaven can boil the pct,
 Tho' the Deil piss in the fire.

Squire Hal, besides, had in this case
 Pretensions rather brassy ;
 For talents, to deserve a place,
 Are qualifications saucy.
 So their worships of the Faculty,
 Quite sick of Merit's rudeness,
 Chose one who should owe it all (d'ye see ?)
 To their gratis grace and goodness !

As once on Pisgah purg'd was the sight
 Of a son of Circumcision,
 So, may be, on this Pisgah height
 Bob's purblind mental vision.
 Nay, Bobby's mouth may be open'd yet,
 Till for eloquence you hail him,
 And swear that he has the Angel met
 That met the Ass of Balaam.

In your heretic sins may ye live and die,
 Ye heretic Eight-and-Thirty!
 But accept, ye sublime majority,
 My congratulations hearty!
 With your honors, as with a certain King,
 In your servants this is striking,
 The more incapacity they bring
 The more they 're to your liking!

It is not unworthy of note that this was one occasion when the two greatest of Scotland's modern great men may be said to have met in the struggle of public life—for while Burns thus at a distance backed Henry Erskine, the name of Walter Scott is found in the roll of those who opposed and voted against him.

TO MR ROBT. CLEGHORN, SAUGHTON MILLS.

O THAT'S THE LASSIE O' MY HEART.

TUNE—*Morag.*

O wat ye wha that lo'es me,
 And has my heart a-keeping?
 O sweet is she that lo'es me,
 As dew's o' summer weeping,
 In tears the rose-buds steeping:

Chorus—O that's the lassie o' my heart,
 My lassie, ever dearer;
 O that's the queen o' woman-kind,
 And ne'er a ane to peer her. to be her peer

If thou shalt meet a lassie
 In grace and beauty charming ;
 That e'en *thy* chosen lassie,
 Erewhile thy breast sae warming,
 Had ne'er sic powers alarming. such

If thou hast heard her talking,
 (And thy attention's plighted,)
 That ilka body talking every one
 But her by thee is slighted,
 And thou art all-delighted.

If thou hast met this fair one,
 When frae her thou hast parted,
 If every other fair one
 But her thou hast deserted,
 And thou art broken-hearted :
 O that's the lassie o' my heart,
 My lassie, ever dearer ;
 O that's the queen o' woman-kind,
 And ne'er a ane to peer her.

MY EVER DEAR CLEGHORN—The foregoing had been sent you long ago, but for reasons which you may have heard. Since I saw you, I have been much the child of disaster. Scarcely began to recover the loss of an only daughter and darling child, I became myself the victim of a rheumatic fever, which brought me to the borders of the grave. After many weeks of a sick-bed, I am just beginning to crawl about.

Thanks, many thanks for my 'Gawin Douglas.' This will probably be delivered to you by a friend of mine, Mr Mundell, Surgeon, whom you may remember to have seen at my house. He wants to inquire after Mr Allan. Best compliments to the amiablest of my friends, Mrs Cleghorn ; and to little Miss, though she will scarce remember me ; and to my thunder-scared friend, Mr Wight. Yours, R. BURNS.

[DUMFRIES, *January 1796.*]

TO MRS WALTER RIDDEL.

DUMFRIES, *29th January 1796.*

I cannot express my gratitude to you for allowing me a longer perusal of *Anacharsis*. In fact, I never met with a book that bewitched me so much ; and I, as a member of the library, must warmly feel the obliga-

tion you have laid us under. Indeed, to me the obligation is stronger than to any other individual of our society, as *Anacharsis* is an indispensable desideratum to a son of the Muses.

The health you wished me in your morning's card is, I think, flown from me for ever. I have not been able to leave my bed to-day till an hour ago. These wickedly unlucky advertisements I lent (I did wrong) to a friend; and I am ill able to go in quest of him.

The Muses have not quite forsaken me. The following detached stanzas I intend to interweave in some disastrous tale of a shepherd 'despairing beside a clear stream.'

[The 'detached stanzas' were the second, third and fourth of the 'Scottish Song' sent through Thomson to Cunningham on 3d August of the previous year, and of which Burns had seemingly forgotten.

The same sheet contained also several of his songs—the ballad 'Bonie Jean' among them.]

I cannot help laughing at your friend's conceit of my picture; and I suspect you are playing off on me some of that fashionable wit called *humbug*. Apropos to pictures, I am just sitting to Reid in this town for a miniature; and I think he has hit by far the best likeness of me ever taken. When you are at any time so idle in town as to call at Reid's painting-room and mention to him that I spoke of such a thing to you, he will shew it to you, else he will not; for both the miniature's existence and its destiny are an inviolable secret and, therefore, very properly trusted, in part, to you.

Have you seen Clarke's *Sonatas*, the subjects from Scots Airs? If not, send for my Copy. R. B.

TO THE SAME.

Bar accident, meeting with Mr Scott in the street, and having the miniature in a book in my pocket, I send you it, as I understand that a servant of yours is in town. The painter, in my opinion, has spoilt the likeness. Return me the bagatelle per first opportunity. I am so ill as to be scarce able to hold this miserable pen to this miserable paper.

R. B.

According to popular tradition, 'early in the month of January, when his health was in the course of improvement, Burns tarried too late at a jovial party in the Globe Tavern. Before returning home, he unluckily remained for some time in the open air and, overpowered by the effects of the liquor he had drunk, fell asleep.* In these circumstances and in the peculiar condition to which a severe medicine had reduced his constitution, a fatal chill penetrated to

* The head of the Globe Inn Close at the point where it joins with what is now Shakespere Street has been pointed out as the place where Burns fell asleep. In the Close a flight of stone steps leads to a loft above a stable. It has also been said that it was on the lowest of these that Burns sat down on leaving the Inn.

his bones ; he reached home with the seeds of a rheumatic fever already in possession of his weakened frame.' No evidence has ever been given of the truth of this story, which bears a suspicious resemblance to a similar one that is told to account for the comparatively early death of Shakespeare. Heron, Burns's first biographer, makes no mention of festivities in a tavern. Neither Currie nor Lockhart alludes to the Globe Inn. The one says 'he dined at a tavern and returned home about three o'clock on a very cold morning, benumbed and intoxicated.' The other says 'Burns was so exceedingly imprudent as to join a festive circle at a tavern dinner, where he remained till about three o'clock in the morning. It has been said that he fell asleep upon the snow on his way home. It is certain that next morning he was sensible of an icy numbness through all his joints.' Lockhart expressly states that this tavern dinner took place 'a few days after' writing to Mrs Dunlop on 31st January. In that case the unlucky festivities must have occurred not 'early in January,' but early in February. It seems strange, to say the least, that Burns's companions, if they saw that he was intoxicated, did not see him to his house, which was only a very short walk from the Globe Inn,* instead of allowing him to fall asleep in the snow. Finally, in 1854, Thomas Thorburn of Ryedale made a special and lengthy investigation into the matter, at the special request of Dr Robert Chambers. He found that the bulk of such local evidence as was then available, and which was entirely based on gossip, was to the effect that Burns fell asleep, not outside the inn, but in it, being overcome, less by liquor than by weakness induced by rheumatism and the drugs he had taken to counteract it, and that his second illness was the result of a chill which going out of a hot room into the cold air of a severe winter night would adequately account for. It is only fair to Burns to state that in all his letters he makes no allusion to a particular 'indiscretion' as having hastened the end which he calmly contemplated. From these one would gather nothing more than that his death was the result of 'a relapse,' after a slight recovery from the attack of rheumatic fever that supervened on the extreme physical and mental prostration caused by his daughter's death. The Globe Inn tradition may be true, or there

* There are three routes by which Burns's house can be reached from the Globe Inn. They measure 413, 296, and 293 yards respectively.

may be an element of truth in it; but it cannot be regarded as an authentic portion of Burns's history.

It is quite certain that on the 28th January Burns was sufficiently well to attend the Mason Lodge and recommend for entry as an apprentice James Georgeson, a Liverpool merchant. Next day he sent his Edinburgh friend Peter Hill his *annual kipper*, or dried salmon, with a brief letter—but saying nothing about his illness.

TO MR PETER HILL.

DUMFRIES, 29th January 1796.

MY DEAR HILL—By the chaise, the driver of which brings you this, I send your annual Kipper; but on the express condition that you do not, like a fool as you were last year, put yourself to five times the value in expense of a return.

I have just time to beg that you will make my best compliments to my fair friend Mrs Hill, Cameron, 'my kinsman' and Ramsay, 'my yoke-fellow in the Lord!' God be with you all! In a week or ten days thou shalt hear at large from thine,
R. BURNS.

In a letter written two days later to Mrs Dunlop, he gave an account of his illness, which, with its 'after many weeks of a sick-bed,' would seem to imply that he was in bed at the time he is asserted to have been at the Globe Inn.

TO MRS DUNLOP.

DUMFRIES, 31st January 1796.

These many months you have been two packets in my debt—what sin of ignorance I have committed against so highly valued a friend I am utterly at a loss to guess. Alas! Madam, ill can I afford, at this time, to be deprived of any of the small remnant of my pleasures. I have lately drunk deep of the cup of affliction. The autumn robbed me of my only daughter and darling child, and that at a distance too, and so rapidly, as to put it out of my power to pay the last duties to her. I had scarcely begun* to recover from that shock, when I became myself the victim of a most severe rheumatic fever and long the die spun doubtful; until after many weeks of a sick bed, it seems to have turned up life, and I am beginning to crawl across my room, and once indeed have been before my own door in the street.

When pleasure fascinates the mental sight,
Affliction purifies the visual ray,
Religion hails the drear, the untried, night,
And shuts, for ever shuts! life's doubtful day.

R. B.

* 'Scarcely' here, as in the letter to Cleghorn at p. 243, would seem to render it barely possible that Walker visited Burns in November 1795, as he professed to have done.

The commandant of the Volunteer corps had sent to make inquiry about his health. Burns replied in rhyme.

TO COLONEL DE PEYSTER.

My honor'd Colonel, deep I feel
 Your interest in the Poet's weal : welfare
 Ah ! now sma' heart hae I to speel climb
 The steep Parnassus
 Surrounded thus by bolus pill
 And potion glasses.

O what a canty warld were it happy
 Would pain and care and sickness spare it,
 And Fortune favor worth and merit
 As they deserve,
 And ay a rowth—roast beef and claret !— plenty
 Syne, wha wad starve ? Then—would

Dame Life, tho' fiction out may trick her,
 And in paste gems and frippery deck her,
 Oh ! flickering, feeble and unsicker uncertain
 I've found her still—
 Ay wavering, like the willow-wicker,
 'Tween good and ill !

Then that curst carmagnole, auld Satan,*
 Watches, like baudrons by a ratton, the cat—rat
 Our sinfu' saul to get a claut on clutch
 Wi' felon ire ;
 Syne, whip ! his tail ye'll ne'er cast saut on— salt
 He's aff like fire.

Ah Nick ! ah Nick ! it is na fair,
 First showing us the tempting ware—
 Bright wine and bonie lasses rare—
 To put us daft ; wild
 Syne weave, unseen, thy spider snare
 O' Hell's damned waft ! woof, weaving

* Satan is here compared uncomplimentarily to a sansculotte of the French Revolution, with whom 'the Carmagnole' was a favourite melody.

Poor Man, the flie, aft bizzes by, fly—buzzes past
 And aft, as chance he comes thee nigh,
 Thy damn'd auld elbow yeuks wi' joy itches
 And hellish pleasure ;
 Already in thy fancy's eye
 Thy sicker treasure ! certain

Soon, heels o'er gowdie, in he gangs, heels-overhead—goes
 And, like a sheep-head on a tangs, tongs
 Thy girnin laugh enjoys his pangs grinning
 And murdering wrestle
 As, dangling in the wind, he hangs
 A gibbet's tassel.

But lest you think I am uncivil
 To plague you with this draunting drivel, drawling
 Abjuring a' intentions evil,
 I quat my pen : quit
 The Lord preserve us frae the Devil !
 Amen ! Amen ! *

* Colonel Arentz Schuyler de Peyster died at Dumfries in November 1822, at the age, it was believed, of ninety-six or ninety-seven. He had held the royal commission for about eighty years. In early life he commanded at Detroit, Michilimackinac, and other parts of Upper Canada, during the Seven Years' War, when he distinguished himself by detaching the Indians from the service of the French. To pursue an obituary notice in the *Dumfries Courier*: 'The deceased also served in various other parts of North America under his uncle, Colonel Schulyer; and after being promoted to the rank of colonel, and commanding for many years the 8th Regiment, he retired to Dumfries, the native town of Mrs de Peyster, the faithful follower of his fortunes in every situation—in camp and in quarters—amidst savage tribes and polished communities—in the most distant stations of Upper Canada as well as in walled and garrisoned cities. . . .

'At the stormy period of the French Revolution, the zeal and talents of our townsman were again called into exercise, in the embodying and training of the 1st Regiment of Dumfries Volunteers. On this occasion, his military ardour completely revived; and so successfully did he labour in his vocation, that in the course of a very few months his associates in arms displayed nearly all the steadiness and precision of a regiment of the line. Of this corps, the author of 'Tam o' Shanter' was an original member; and we have even heard it whispered that the private and field officer (the latter of whom had a great fondness for literature, and a ready talent at versification) engaged, unknown to each other, in a poetical controversy, which was conducted with considerable spirit through the respectable medium of the *Dumfries Journal*. Many members of the regiment still survive; and to mark their regard for the memory of the deceased, the officers resumed the habiliments so long laid aside, while a party of the privates carried his body to the grave, supported by the staff of the Dumfriesshire Militia.

'In his person, Colonel De Peyster was tall, soldierlike, and commanding; in his manners, easy, affable, and open; in his affections, warm, generous, and sincere; in his principles, and particularly his political principles, firm even to inflexibility. No man, we believe, ever possessed more of the principle of vitality. Old age, which had silvered his hair and

Dr Currie says of Burns at this period: 'His appetite now began to fail; his hand shook, and his voice faltered on any exertion or motion. His pulse became weaker and more rapid, and pain in the larger joints and in the hands and feet deprived him of the enjoyment of refreshing sleep. Too much dejected in his spirits, and too well aware of his real situation to entertain hopes of recovery, he was ever musing on the approaching desolation of his family, and his spirits sank into a uniform gloom.'

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 5th Feb. 1796.

O Robby Burns, are ye sleeping yet?
Or are ye wauken, I would wit?

The pause you have made, my dear Sir, is awful! Am I never to hear from you again? I know, and I lament how much you have been afflicted of late; but I trust that returning health and spirits will now enable you to resume the pen, and delight us with your musings. I have still about a dozen Scotch and Irish airs that I wish 'married to immortal verse.' We have several true-born Irishmen on the Scottish list; but they are naturalised, and reckoned our own good subjects. Indeed, we have none better. I believe I before told you, that I have been much urged by some friends to publish a collection of all our favourite airs and songs in octavo, embellished with a number of etchings by our ingenious friend Allan; what is your opinion of this? G. T.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

February 1796.

Many thanks, my dear Sir, for your handsome, elegant present to Mrs B.,* and for my remaining volume of P. Pindar. Peter is a delightful fellow and a first favorite of mine. Now to business. How are you paid by your subscribers here? I gave you in the names of Robert Riddel of Glenriddel, and his brother, Walter Riddel of Woodley Park.

furrowed his cheeks, appeared to make no impression on his inner man; and those who knew him best declare that, up to the period of his last illness, his mind appeared as active and his intellect as vigorous as they were fifty years ago. When the weather permitted, he still took his accustomed exercise, and walked round the billiard-table, or bestrode his gigantic charger, apparently with as little difficulty as a man of middle age. When so mounted, we have often fancied we beheld in him the last connecting-link betwixt the old and new schools of military men.'

* A shawl,

Glenriddel subscribed only for the *Songs*; Walter Riddel for both the *Songs* and *Sonatas*. Glenriddel's widow, to whom he left all his fortune, lives now in your town, and Walter is also at present in it: call on them for their cash. I mention these matters because probably you have a delicacy on my account, as if I had presented them with their copies—a kindness neither of them deserves at my hands. They are bona fide subscribers, and as such treat them. I also supplied another subscriber, Mr Sharpe of Hoddam, with the second set of *Sonatas* (my own copy); so charge him accordingly. Mr Gordon of Kenmure, who subscribes for the *Songs* only, unknown to me at the time, in a money transaction where I was concerned, paid the 10s. 6d. to my account. So there I am your debtor.

I am much pleased with your idea of publishing a Collection of our songs in octavo, with etchings. I am extremely willing to lend every assistance in my power. The Irish airs I shall cheerfully undertake the task of finding verses for. I have already, you know, equipt three with words, and the other day I strung up a kind of rhapsody to another Hibernian melody which I admire much.

HEY FOR A LASS WI' A TOCHER.

TUNE—*Balinamona and ora.*

Awa' wi' your witchcraft o' beauty's alarms,
 The slender bit beauty you grasp in your arms;
 O gie me the lass that has acres o' charms,
 O gie me the lass wi' the weel-stockit farms. well-stocked

Chorus—Then hey, for a lass wi' a tocher, dowry
 Then hey, for a lass wi' a tocher;
 Then hey, for a lass wi' a tocher;
 The nice yellow guineas for me.

Your beauty's a flower in the morning that blows,
 And withers the faster, the faster it grows;
 But the rapturous charm o' the bonie green knowes, knolls
 Ilk spring they're new deekit wi' bonie white yowes. sheep

And e'en when this beauty your bosom has blest,
 The brightest o' beauty may cloy when posset;
 But the sweet yellow darlings wi' Geordie imprest, the king's head
 The langer ye ha'e them, the mair they're carest.

If this will do, you have now four of my Irish engagement—Humors of Glen, Captain O’Kean, Oonagh’s Waterfall, and Balinamona and Ora. In my by-past songs I dislike one thing—the name Chloris. I meant it as the fictitious name of a certain lady, but, on second thoughts, it is a high incongruity to have a Greek appellation to a Scotch pastoral ballad.* Of this and some things else in my next: I have more amendments to propose. What you once mentioned, of ‘flaxen locks,’ is just: they cannot enter into an *elegant* description of beauty. Of this again. God bless you!

R. B.

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

[Feb. 1796.]

Your ‘Hey for a Lass wi’ a Tocher’ is a most excellent song, and with you the subject is something new indeed. It is the first time I have seen you debasing the god of self-desire into an amateur of acres and guineas.

I am happy to find you approve of my proposed octavo edition. Allan has designed and etched about twenty plates for that work. Independently of the Hogarthian humour with which they abound, they exhibit the character and costume of the Scottish peasantry with inimitable felicity. In this respect, he himself says, they will far exceed the aquatinta plates he did for the ‘Gentle Shepherd,’ because in the etching he sees clearly what he is doing, but not so with the aquatinta, which he could not manage to his mind. The Dutch Boors of Ostade are scarcely more characteristic and natural than the Scottish figures in those etchings.

G. T.

Some years before, as has been seen, Burns had taken a kindly zealous interest in James Clarke, a schoolmaster at Moffat, whom he believed to be a worthy man suffering under unrighteous persecution. He had lent Clarke a considerable sum of money. The debt had probably lain for years unnoticed by Burns, although money was never plentiful with him and a few debts of his own hung over his head. Now, when his salary was reduced and medical expenses were added to his ordinary outlay, Burns was obliged to beg his old friend to repay either the whole or part of the loan. Clarke, who was now in good circumstances as a teacher at Forfar, answered on the 18th February, and his letter reveals by reflection the condition of Burns’s affairs, as well as the kind feelings with which he had inspired the writer:

* Our poet never explained what name he would have substituted for Chloris.—THOMSON.

MY DEAR FRIEND—Your letter makes me very unhappy ; the more so as I had heard very flattering accounts of your situation some months ago. A note [21s.] is enclosed ; and if such partial payments will be acceptable, this shall soon be followed by more. My appointment here has more than answered my expectations ; but furnishing a large house, &c., has kept me still very poor ; and the persecution I suffered from that rascal, Lord Hopetoun, brought me into expenses which, with all my economy, I have not yet rubbed off. Be so kind as write me. Your disinterested friendship had made an impression which time cannot efface. Believe me, my dear Burns, yours in sincerity,

JAMES CLARKE.

Grace Aiken, a daughter of Burns's early friend, Robert Aiken, of Ayr, had occasion this spring to pass through Dumfries, on her way to pay a visit in Liverpool. 'Walking along the street towards the residence of her friend, Mrs Copland, she passed a tall, slovenly-looking man, of sickly aspect, who presently uttered an exclamation which made her turn round. It was Burns, but so changed from his former self that she could hardly have recognised him, except by his voice. When she asked him playfully if he had been going to pass her without notice, he spoke as if he felt that it was proper for him, nowadays, to let his old friends be the first to hold forth the hand of friendship. At her pressing request he accompanied her to Mrs Copland's house ; he even consented, after much entreaty, to go home and dress, so that he might return at four to dinner. He spent the evening cheerfully, and retired about midnight. The circumstance is worthy of notice, because neither Mrs Copland nor any of her friends—all members of the best society in Dumfries—had any objection to entertaining or meeting Burns. The hostess had not seen him for a considerable time, but from no cause affecting his reputation.'

Burns was well enough on the 14th of April to attend a meeting of the Mason Lodge. On this occasion Captain Adam Gordon, brother of his friend Gordon of Kenmure, was admitted apprentice. It is not unlikely that, both on this occasion and on the 28th of January, Burns made an effort, if not a sacrifice, for the sake of persons whom he regarded as friends.*

* The following memoranda from the record of the Dumfries Lodge cover all the meetings which took place during the period of Burns's connection with the Lodge :

27th Dec. 1791.—Burns present.

‘It was hoped by some of his friends,’ says Dr Currie, ‘that if he could live through the months of spring, the succeeding season might restore him. But they were disappointed.’ The month of May came in with more than common geniality;* but it could only charm the poet’s sense, it could not infuse new vigour into his languid frame. † Being now entirely laid aside from duty, Burns understood that, as was usual in such cases, his salary would be reduced; and this, as may well be believed, was no small addition to his distress. Dr Currie says that the Board, to their honour, continued his full emoluments; but it appears that their resolution to do so did not reach the poet in time to bring him any comfort. It is certain that a young ‘expectant’ of Excise, named Stobie, did duty for him all the time, presumably with the object of earning for him the reduced pay. Dr Currie also states that ‘Mr Graham of Fintry, hearing of the poet’s illness, though unacquainted with its dangerous nature, made an offer of his assistance towards procuring him the means of preserving his health.’ The letter containing this offer was dated on the 15th July, so that the poet could not have received it more than a couple of days before consciousness left him.†

6th Feb. 1792.—Burns present. On this occasion, Philip Ditcher, Esq., of 3d regt. of Dragoons, now quartered in Dumfries, is entered apprentice.

14th May 1792.—Burns present. Chas. Pye, Captains Waller, Watson, and Parslow, of 3d regt. of Dragoons, all admitted as apprentices.

31st May 1792.—Burns present.

5th June 1792.—Burns present. Ed. Andrews of the Dragoons, and John Syme, Esq. of Barncaillzie, admitted brethren, without fees.

22d Nov. 1792.—Burns present.

30th Nov. 1792.—Burns present and elected senior warden.

30th Nov. 1793.—The senior warden [Burns] present. Sam. Clark, Junr., admitted a member.

27th Dec. 1793.—Burns not present. [He was at this time indisposed.]

6th May 1794.—Burns not mentioned. D. M’Culloch admitted a member.

29th Nov. 1794.—Burns present.

30th Nov. 1795.—Burns not mentioned.

28th Dec. 1795.—Burns not mentioned.

28th Jan. 1796.—Burns present. Appeared Mr James Georgeson, mercht. in Liverpool, who being recommended by Brother Burns, was admitted apprentice. His fees applied towards defraying the expenses of the night.

14th April 1796.—Burns present. Capt. Adam Gordon admitted apprentice.

16th April 1796.—Burns not mentioned.

* ‘It is the finest weather in the world. The whole country is covered with green and blossoms; and the sun shines perpetually through a light east wind, which would have brought you here from Boston since it began to blow.’—*Jeffrey to his Brother*, 20th May 1796.
—COCKBURN’S *Life of Lord Jeffrey*.

† ‘Another charge of cruelty has been brought forward against the Board—that of refusing his full salary during his illness, which a little explanation will set to rights. A few years previous to this period, an addition of £15 per annum had been made to the

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[April 1796.]

Alas! my dear Thomson, I fear it will be sometime ere I tune my lyre again! 'By Babel streams,' &c. Almost ever since I wrote you last, I have only known existence by the pressure of the heavy hand of Sickness; and have counted Time by the repercussions of Pain! Rheumatism, Cold and Fever have formed, to me, a terrible Trinity in Unity, which makes me close my eyes in misery and open them without hope. I look on the vernal day, and say with poor Fergusson:

'Say, wherefore has an all-indulgent Heaven
Light to the comfortless and wretched given?'

This will be delivered to you by a Mrs Hyslop, Landlady of the Globe Tavern here, which for these many years has been my Howff,* and where our friend Clarke and I have had many a merry squeeze. I mention this, because she will be a very proper hand to bring that seal you talk of.

I am highly delighted with Mr Allan's etchings. 'Woo'd an' Married an' a' is admirable! The *grouping* is beyond all praise. The *expression* of the figures, conformable to the story in the ballad, is absolutely faultless perfection. I next admire 'Turninspyke.' What I like least is 'Jenny said to Jocky.' Besides the female being in her appearance *quite a virago*, if you take her stooping into the account, she is at least two inches taller than her lover.

salaries, accompanied with the condition of being stopped to officers not doing duty. This still existed in Burns's time, and he was no worse treated than others in similar circumstances of indisposition. It is here incumbent on me to mention that Commissioner Graham, regretting, I have no doubt, his inability to comply with the poet's wishes as to the full salary, sent him a private donation of £5, which, I believe, nearly or totally compensated the loss.—ALEXANDER FINDLATER, in *Glasgow Courier*, March 1834.

* This famous hostelry in Dumfries, thus directly declared by Burns to be his 'howff' (favourite resort), is still used as an inn, being No. 44 in one of the High Street closes, and opposite the head of Assembly Street. It is of three storeys; and Mr William M'Dowall, the historian of Dumfries, says that 'eighty years ago it must have been one of the best middle-class tenements of the town.' It has undergone little change since the poet's time. His 'howff' proper is a small snuggerly on the ground-floor, entered through the kitchen. One of its nooks displays the words 'Burns's Corner,' and contains an arm-chair in which he used to sit. Above the fireplace is a cartoon representing Coila casting her mantle of inspiration over the poet, while on each side is a picture of the 'rough bur-thistle,' from which he turned aside his wedding-hook, 'to spare the symbol dear.' Two small panes of glass in the window of a room on the second floor bear the mark of his diamond. One of the inscriptions consists of the chorus of 'Lovely Polly Stewart;' the other is:

'Gin a body meet a body
Coming thro' the grain,
Gin a body kiss a body,
The thing's a body's ain.'

Mrs Smith, the present proprietrix of the Globe Inn, possesses several articles which are declared to be Burns's. These include his punch bowl and one of the chairs with which he commenced housekeeping.

I will thank you much for a number or two of that magazine you mention. Poor Cleghorn! I sincerely sympathise with him. Happy I am to think that he yet has a well-grounded hope of health and enjoyment in this world. As for me—but that is a *damning* subject! Farewell!!!

R. B.

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

4th May 1796.

I need not tell you, my good Sir, what concern the receipt of your last gave me, and how much I sympathise in your sufferings. But do not, I beseech you, give yourself up to despondency, nor speak the language of despair. The vigour of your constitution, I trust, will soon set you on your feet again; and then it is to be hoped you will see the wisdom and the necessity of taking due care of a life so valuable to your family, to your friends, and to the world.

Trusting that your next will bring agreeable accounts of your convalescence, and returning good spirits, I remain, with sincere regard,
yours,
G. T.

P.S.—Mrs Hyslop, I doubt not, delivered the gold seal to you in good condition.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[Date: about 18th May 1796.]

MY DEAR SIR—Inclosed is a Certificate which, though a little different from Mr M'Knight's model, I suppose will amply answer the purpose; and I beg you will prosecute the miscreants without mercy. When your Publication is finished, I intend publishing a Collection, on a cheap plan, of all the songs I have written for you, the *Museum*, &c.,—at least, of all the songs of which I wish to be called the Author.

I do not propose this so much in the way of emolument, as to do justice to my Muse, lest I should be blamed for trash I never saw, or be defrauded by other claimants of what is justly my own. The post is going; I will write you again to-morrow. Many, many thanks for the beautiful seal.*

R. B.

The certificate prefixed by Thomson to his second half-volume, published 1798, was—‘I Do hereby certify and declare, That ALL the Songs of my writing, published and to be published by Mr George Thomson of Edinburgh, are so published by my authority. And moreover, That I never empowered any other person whatever to publish any of the Songs written by me for his Work.

* See Letter to Cunningham of March 3, 1794.

And I authorise him to prosecute, in his own name, any person or persons who shall publish any of those Songs, without his consent.
—In testimony whereof, &c., ‘ROBERT BURNS.’

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

[About May 17, 1796.]

MY DEAR SIR—I once mentioned to you an air which I have long admired—‘Here’s a health to them that’s awa’, hiney’—but I forget if you took any notice of it. I have just been trying to suit it with verses; and I beg leave to recommend the air to your attention once more. I have only begun with it.

JESSY.

Altho’ thou maun never be mine,
Altho’ even hope is denied;
’Tis sweeter for thee despairing,
Than aught in the world beside—Jessy.

Chorus—Here’s a health to ane I loe dear,
Here’s a health to ane I loe dear;
Thou art sweet as the smile when fond lovers meet,
And soft as their parting tear—Jessy.

I mourn through the gay, gaudy day,
As, hopeless, I muse on thy charms;
But welcome the dream o’ sweet slumber,
For then I am lockt in thy arms—Jessy.

[I guess by the dear angel smile;
I guess by the love-rolling e’e;
But why urge the tender confession,
’Gainst fortune’s fell, cruel decree—Jessy?]

eye

This will be delivered by a Mr Lewars, a young fellow of uncommon merit—indeed, by far the cleverest fellow I have met with in this part of the world. His only fault is—D-m-cratie heresy. As he will be a day or two in town, you will have leisure, if you chuse, to write me by him; and if you have a spare half-hour to spend with him, I shall place your kindness to my account.

I have no copies of the songs I have sent you, and I have taken a fancy to review them all, and possibly may mend some of them; so, when you have complete leisure, I will thank you for either the Originals or copies. I had rather be the author of five well-written songs than of ten otherwise. My verses to 'Cauld Kail' I will suppress; as also those to 'Laddie, lie near me.' They are neither worthy of my name nor of your book.

I have great hopes that the genial influence of the approaching summer will set me to rights, but as yet I cannot boast of returning health. I have now reason to believe that my complaint is a flying gout—a d—nable business!

Do let me know how Cleghorn is, and remember me to him.—Yours ever,

R. BURNS.

[P.S.—]This should have been delivered to you a month ago, but my friend's trunk miscarried and was not recovered until he came home again.* I am still very poorly, but should like much to hear from you.

R. B.

Jessy, a sister of Burns's brother-exciseman Lewars, and the heroine of the song mentioned in this letter, was, although then but eighteen years of age, a ministering angel in Burns's house during the whole of this dismal period. It is quite characteristic of Burns and a proof of his artistic thoroughness to find him, even in his present melancholy circumstances, imagining himself as the lover of his wife's kind-hearted young friend, as if the position of an innamorata were the most exalted in which his fancy could place any woman he admired or towards whom he felt gratitude.

This is not the only poem Burns addressed to Jessy Lewars. He called on her one morning and offered, if she would play him any tune of which she was fond, to write new verses to it. She sat down at her piano and played over several times the air of an old song beginning—

The robin cam to the wren's nest,	
And keekit in, and keekit in:	looked
O weel's me on your auld pow!	old head
Wad ye be in? wad ye be in?	
Ye 'se ne'er get leave to lie without,	Ye shall
And I within, and I within,	
As lang's I hae an auld clout	old rag
To row you in, to row you in.†	roll

* The letter appears to have been despatched by post on the 17th June. Currie unaccountably divides the letter in two.

† This set of old song is from Johnson's *Museum*, song 406.

As soon as his ear was accustomed to the melody, Burns began to write, and in a very few minutes produced the beautiful song :

OH, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST.

Oh, wert thou in the cauld blast,
 On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
 My plaidie to the angry airt, quarter
 I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee :
 Or did Misfortune's bitter storms
 Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
 Thy bield should be my bosom, shelter
 To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste
 Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
 The desert were a paradise,
 If thou wert there, if thou wert there ;
 Or were I monarch o' the globe,
 Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign ;
 The brightest jewel in my crown
 Wad be my queen, wad be my queen. Would

Many years after, when Burns was only a memory, and Jessy Lewars was spending her quiet years of widowhood over her book or her knitting in a little parlour in Maxwelltown, the verses attracted the regard of Felix Mendelssohn, who seems to have divined the feeling, beyond common love, which Burns breathed through them, and married them to a new and exquisitely pathetic air.

Parliament being dissolved in May, there was another contest (in June) for the Stewartry of Kirkcudbright. Heron was opposed on this occasion by the Hon. Montgomery Stewart, a younger son of the Earl of Galloway. Burns, reduced in health as he was—confined, indeed to a sick-chamber—could not be an unconcerned spectator. He produced a ballad at once more allegorical and more bitter against Mr Heron's opponents than any he had launched on the former occasion. There was a set of vagrant traffickers in Scotland, somewhat superior to pedlars, and called *Troggers* or *Trokers*. They dealt in clothes and miscellaneous articles, and

their wares were called by the general name of *Troggin*. Burns put his ballad in the mouth of a trogger, with the characters of the Galloway party for his stock.

BUY BRAW TROGGIN :

AN EXCELLENT NEW SONG.

TUNE—*Buy Broom Besoms*.

Wha will buy my troggin,
Fine election ware,
Broken trade o' Broughton,*
A' in high repair ?

Chorus—Buy braw troggin fine
Frae the banks o' Dee !
Wha want troggin
Let them come to me !

Here's a noble Earl's
Fame and high renown,†
For an auld sang—
It's thought the gudes were stown. goods—stolen

Here's the worth o' Broughton
In a needle's e'e.
Here's a reputation
Tint by Balmaghie.‡ Lost

Here's an honest conscience
Might a Prince adorn,
Frae the Downs o' Tinwald —
So was never worn !§

Here's its stuff and lynin,
Cardoness's head—||
Fine for a soger,
A' the wale o' lead. choice

* Murray of Broughton. See p. 198.

† The Earl of Galloway.

‡ Gordon of Balmaghie. See p. 198.

§ An allusion to John Bushby, who resided at Tinwald Downs.

|| Maxwell of Cardoness. See p. 199.

Here's a little wadset—
 Buittle's scrap o' Truth,*
 Pawn'd in a gin-shop,
 Quenching haly drouth.

mortgage

Here's armorial bearings
 Frae the manse of Urr:
 The crest, an auld crab-apple
 Rotten at the core.†

Here is Satan's picture,
 Like a bizzard-gled
 Pouncing poor Redcastle,‡
 Sprawlin' as a taed.

bizzard kite

load

Here's the font where Douglas §
 Stane and mortar names,
 Lately us'd at Caily
 Christening Murray's crimes.

Here's the worth and wisdom
 Collieston can boast: ||
 By a thievish midge
 They had been nearly lost.

Here is Murray's fragments
 O' the Ten Commands,
 Gifted by Black Jock—¶
 To get them off his hands.

Saw ye e'er sic troggin?—
 If to buy ye're slack,
 Hornie's turnin' chapman:
 He'll buy a' the pack!

The Devil

Heron was successful in this contest also, but a petition having been presented, objecting to his return, he was unseated. He died on his way down to Scotland. Burns heard the result of

* Rev. George Maxwell, minister of Buittle. See p. 199.

† This looks like a retort on the epigram launched by the Rev. Mr Muirhead against Burns after the election of the previous year.

‡ Walter Sloan Lawrie of Redcastle,

|| Copland of Collieston,

§ See p. 199.

¶ John Bushby.

the election ; but he was dead before the petition was considered. Allan Cunningham says : ‘It was one of the dreams of his day—in which Burns indulged—that, by some miraculous movement, the Tory counsellors of the king would be dismissed, and the Whigs, with the Prince of Wales at their head, rule and reign in their stead. That Heron aided in strengthening this “devout imagination” is certain : but then the Laird of Kerroughtree was the victim of the delusion himself.’

Dr Currie says : ‘The sense of his poverty and of the approaching distress of his infant family pressed heavily on Burns as he lay on the bed of death ; yet he alluded to his indigence, at times, with something approaching to his wonted gaiety. “What business,” said he to Dr Maxwell, who attended him with the utmost zeal, “has a physician to waste his time on me? I am a poor pigeon not worth plucking. Alas! I have not feathers enough upon me to carry me to my grave.”’ In even a gayer spirit he would sometimes scribble verses of compliment to Jessy Lewars, as she tripped about the house. The story goes that ‘his surgeon, Mr Brown,* one day brought in a long sheet, containing the particulars of a menagerie of wild beasts which he had just been visiting. As Mr Brown was handing the sheet to Miss Lewars, Burns seized it and wrote upon it a couple of verses with red chalk ; then handed it to Miss Lewars, saying that it was now fit to be presented to a lady.’ The verses were :

Talk not to me of savages
 From Afric’s burning sun !
 No savage e’er can rend my heart
 As, Jessy, thou hast done.

But Jessy’s lovely hand in mine
 A mutual faith to plight—
 Not even to view the heavenly choir
 Would be so blest a sight.

On another occasion, while she was in the sick-room, he took up a crystal goblet containing wine and water, and after writing upon it the following verses in the character of a Toast, presented it to her :

* Dr Maxwell is commonly understood to have been Burns’s sole medical attendant.

Fill me with the rosy wine ;
 Call a toast—a toast divine ;
 Give the Poet's darling flame—
 Lovely Jessy be her name :
 Then thou mayest freely boast
 Thou hast given a peerless toast.

Miss Lewars complaining of indisposition, he said, that to provide for the worst, he would write her epitaph. He accordingly inscribed the following on another goblet, saying : 'That will be a companion to the Toast :'

Say, sages, what 's the charm on earth
 Can turn Death's dart aside ?
 It is not purity and worth,
 Else Jessy had not died.

When she recovered a little, the poet said : 'There is a poetic reason for it,' and wrote the following :

But rarely seen since Nature's birth,
 The natives of the sky !
 Yet still one seraph 's left on earth,
 For Jessy did not die.

Then he would joke with her about her admirers, and speculate on her matrimonial destiny. 'There's Bob Spalding,' he would say : 'he has not as much brains as a midge could lean its elbow on ; he won't do.' And he generally wound up with the remark, that 'being a poet, he was also a prophet—for anciently they were the same thing—and he could therefore foretell that James Thomson would be the man'—a prediction which time fulfilled.*

At the approach of the 4th of June, Mrs Walter Riddel asked him to go to the Birthday Assembly, to show his loyalty, and at the same time begged a copy of a song he had lately written. He answered as follows :

* Jessy Lewars married James Thomson, a writer in Dumfries, on 3d June 1799. He died on 5th May 1849, at the age of seventy-five. She spent her widowhood in Maxwelltown, where she died on 26th May 1855, at the age of seventy-seven. She is buried quite close to the Burns Mausoleum, the tombstone of the Thomsons being fixed in the wall on the south side of it. John Lewars, Burns's friend, rose to be Supervisor of Excise, and died in 1826, at the age of fifty-seven.

TO MRS RIDDEL.

DUMFRIES, 4th June 1796.

I am in such miserable health as to be utterly incapable of shewing my loyalty in any way. Rackt as I am with rheumatisms, I meet every face with a greeting like that of Balak to Balaam—‘Come curse me Jacob; and come defy me Israel!’ So say I—‘Come curse me that east wind; and come, defy me the north!’ Would you have me in such circumstances copy you out a love-song? No! if I must write, let it be Sedition, or Blasphemy, or something else that begins with a B, so that I may grin with the grin of iniquity and rejoice with the rejoicing of an apostate angel.

—‘All good to me is lost,
Evil, be thou my good!’

I may perhaps see you on Saturday; but I will not be at the ball. Why should I? ‘Man delights not me, nor woman either!’ Can you supply me with the song, ‘Let us all be unhappy together?’—Do, if you can, and oblige *le pauvre misérable*.
R. B.

The progress of his disease and the gradual setting of his hopes of life are best shown in the letters he wrote at this time. That which follows was addressed to his friend the schoolmaster of Forfar, who had sent him in February a small instalment of his long overdue debt. He had asked money from Clarke in February; a small sum to account had been promptly sent, and he now requests a further instalment. Such a fact shows the straits to which he was reduced by his illness and the reduction of his salary, and how little was required to help him out of his difficulties.

TO MR JAMES CLARKE, SCHOOLMASTER, FORFAR.

MY DEAR CLARKE—Still, still the victim of affliction; were you to see the emaciated figure who now holds the pen to you, you would not know your old friend. Whether I shall ever get about again, is only known to HIM, the Great Unknown, whose creature I am. Alas, Clarke, I begin to fear the worst! As to my individual self, I am tranquil;—I would despise myself if I were not: but Burns’s poor widow and half a dozen of his dear little ones, helpless orphans! *there* I am weak as a woman’s tear.* Enough of this! ’tis half my disease!

I duly received your last, inclosing the *note*.† It came extremely in time, and I am much obliged to your punctuality. Again I must request you to do me the same kindness. Be so very good as, *by return of post*, to inclose me another note, I trust you can do it without much inconveni-

* ‘But I am weaker than a woman’s tear.’—*Troilus and Cressida*.

† Colloquial for a pound-note.

ence, and it will seriously oblige me. If I must go, I leave a few friends behind me, whom I shall regret while consciousness remains. I know I shall live in their remembrance.

Adieu, dear Clarke! That I shall ever see you again, is, I am afraid, highly improbable.

R. BURNS.

DUMFRIES, *June 26th*, 1796.

TO MR JAMES JOHNSON, EDINBURGH.

DUMFRIES [*June 1796.*]

How are you, my dear Friend? and how comes on your fifth volume? You may probably think that for some time past I have neglected you and your work; but, alas, the hand of pain, and sorrow and care has these many months lain heavy on me! Personal and domestic affliction have almost entirely banished that alacrity and life with which I used to woo the rural Muse of Scotia. In the meantime, let us finish what we have so well begun. The gentleman, Mr Lewars, a particular friend of mine, will bring out any proofs (if they are ready) or any message you may have. Farewell!

R. BURNS.

Turn over.

[*June 16.*] You should have had this when Mr Lewars called on you; but his saddle-bags miscarried. I am extremely anxious for your work, as indeed I am for every thing concerning you and your welfare. You are a good, worthy, honest fellow, and have a good right to live in this world, because you deserve it. Many a merry meeting this Publication has given us, and possibly it may give us more, though, alas! I fear it. This protracting, slow, consuming illness which hangs over me will, I doubt much, my ever-dear friend, arrest my sun before he has well reached his middle career, and will turn over the Poet to far other and more important concerns than studying the brilliancy of Wit or the pathos of Sentiment. However, Hope is the cordial of the human heart, and I endeavour to cherish it as well as I can. Let me hear from you as soon as convenient. Your Work is a great one; and though now that it is near finished, I see, if we were to begin again, two or three things that might be mended, yet I will venture to prophesy, that to future ages your Publication will be the text-book and standard of Scottish Song and Music.

I am ashamed to ask another favor of you, because you have been so very good already; but my wife has a very particular friend of hers, a young lady who sings well, to whom she wishes to present *The Scots Musical Museum*. If you have a spare copy, will you be so obliging as to send it by the very first Fly, as I am anxious to have it soon.*

Yours ever,

R. BURNS.

* 'In this humble and delicate manner did poor Burns ask for a copy of the work of which he was principally the founder, and to which he had contributed, *gratuitously*, not less than 184 *original, altered, and collected songs*! The editor has seen 180 transcribed by his own hand for the *Museum*.'—CROMEK.

On the day that he wrote this letter, Burns was removed to Brow, a village on the Solway, in the hope that he might benefit by bathing, country quarters, and riding.

In answer to his request, Johnson sent three copies of the *Museum*, one of which the Poet presented to Jessy Lewars.* It was inscribed :

TO MISS JESSY LEWARS.

Thine be the volumes, Jessy fair,
And with them take the Poet's prayer :—
That Fate may in her fairest page,
With every kindest, best presage
Of future bliss, enroll thy name :
While native worth, and spotless fame,
And wakeful caution to beware
Of ill, but chief man's felon snare ;
All blameless joys on earth we find,
And all the treasures of the mind :—
These be thy Guardian and Reward !
So prays thy faithful friend, the Bard.

R. BURNS.

June 26th, 1796.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

BROW, 4th July 1796.

MY DEAR SIR—I received your songs ; but my health is so precarious, nay dangerously situated, that, as a last effort, I am here at sea-bathing quarters. Besides my inveterate rheumatism, my appetite is quite gone ; and I am so emaciated as to be scarce able to support myself on my own legs. Alas ! is this a time for me to woo the Muses ? However, I am still anxiously willing to serve your work, and, if possible, shall try. I would not like to see another employed, unless you could lay your hand upon a poet whose productions would be equal to the rest. You will see my alterations and remarks on the margin of each song. My address is still Dumfries. Farewell ! and God bless you !

R. BURNS.

Mrs Walter Riddel, who was herself in poor health at this time, was living at a place not far from the village, and hearing of Burns's arrival, she invited him to dinner, and sent her

* The volumes are now in possession of Lord Rosebery.

carriage for him, as he was unable to walk. 'I was struck,' she said in a confidential letter to a friend written soon after, 'with his appearance on entering the room. The stamp of death was imprinted on his features. He seemed already touching the brink of eternity. His first salutation was: "Well, madam, have you any commands for the other world?" I replied, that it seemed a doubtful case which of us should be there soonest, and that I hoped he would yet live to write my epitaph. He looked in my face with an air of great kindness, and expressed his concern at seeing me look so ill, with his accustomed sensibility. At table he ate little or nothing, and he complained of having entirely lost the tone of his stomach. We had a long and serious conversation about his present situation, and the approaching termination of all his earthly prospects. He spoke of his death without any of the ostentation of philosophy, but with firmness as well as feeling, as an event likely to happen very soon, and which gave him concern chiefly from leaving his four children so young and unprotected, and his wife in so interesting a situation—in hourly expectation of lying-in of a fifth. He mentioned, with seeming pride and satisfaction, the promising genius of his eldest son, and the flattering marks of approbation he had received from his teachers, and dwelt particularly on his hopes of that boy's future conduct and merit. His anxiety for his family seemed to hang heavy upon him, and the more perhaps from the reflection that he had not done them all the justice he was so well qualified to do. Passing from this subject, he shewed great concern about the care of his literary fame, and particularly the publication of his posthumous works. He said he was well aware that his death would occasion some noise, and that every scrap of his writing would be revived against him to the injury of his future reputation: that letters and verses written with unguarded and improper freedom, and which he earnestly wished to have buried in oblivion, would be handed about by idle vanity or malevolence when no dread of his resentment would restrain them or prevent the censures of shrill-tongued malice or the insidious sarcasms of envy from pouring forth all their venom to bläst his fame.

'He lamented that he had written many epigrams on persons

against whom he entertained no enmity, and whose characters he should be sorry to wound; and many indifferent poetical pieces which he feared would now, with all their imperfections on their head, be thrust upon the world. On this account, he deeply regretted having deferred to put his papers in a state of arrangement, as he was now quite incapable of the exertion.' The lady goes on to mention many other topics of a private nature on which he spoke. 'The conversation,' she adds, 'was kept up with great evenness and animation on his side. I had seldom seen his mind greater or more collected. There was frequently a considerable degree of vivacity in his sallies, and they would probably have had a greater share, had not the concern and dejection I could not disguise damped the spirit of pleasantry he seemed not unwilling to indulge.'

'We parted about sunset on the evening of that day (the 5th July 1796); the next day I saw him again, and we parted, to meet no more!'

TO ALEXANDER CUNNINGHAM, ESQ.

Brow, Sea-bathing Quarters, 7th July 1796.

MY DEAR CUNNINGHAM—I received yours here this moment and am indeed highly flattered with the approbation of the literary circle you mention; a literary circle inferior to none in the two kingdoms. Alas! my friend, I fear the voice of the bard will soon be heard among you no more! For these eight or ten months I have been ailing, sometimes bedfast and sometimes not; but these last three months I have been tortured with an excruciating rheumatism, which has reduced me to nearly the last stage. You actually would not know me if you saw me. Pale, emaciated and so feeble as occasionally to need help from my chair—my spirits fled! fled!—but I can no more on the subject—only the medical folks tell me that my last and only chance is bathing and country quarters, and riding. The dence of the matter is this: when an Exciseman is off duty, his salary is reduced to £35 instead of £50. What way, in the name of thrift, shall I maintain myself and keep a horse in country quarters—with a wife and five children at home, on £35? I mention this because I had intended to beg your utmost interest and all the friends you can muster, to move our Commissioners of the Excise to grant me the full salary—I dare say you know them all personally. If they do not grant it me, I must lay my account with an exit truly *en poëte*. If I die not of disease, I must perish with hunger.

I have sent you one of the songs (Lord Gregory); the other, my memory does not serve me with and I have no copy here; but I shall be at home soon, when I will send it you. Apropos to being at home, Mrs Burns threatens in a week or two to add one more to my paternal charge, which, if of the right gender, I intend shall be introduced to the world by the respectable designation of *Alexander Cunningham Burns*.^{*} My last was *James Glencairn*, so you can have no objection to the company of nobility. Farewell!

ROBT. BURNS.

TO THE SAME.†

Did Thomson shew [you] the following song, the last I made or probably will make for some time? The air is my favorite—

[Chorus and verses 1 and 2 of *Here's a health to ane I loe dear*.]

I shall be impatient to hear from you. As to me, my plan is to address the Board by petition, and then if any friend has thrown in a word, 'tis a great deal in my favor. Adieu!

R. BURNS.

TO MR GILBERT BURNS.

Brow, Sunday, 10th July 1796.

DEAR BROTHER—It will be no very pleasing news to you to be told that I am dangerously ill and not likely to get better. An inveterate rheumatism has reduced me to such a state of debility, and my appetite is so totally gone, that I can scarcely stand on my legs. I have been a week at sea-bathing, and I will continue there, or in a friend's house in the country, all the summer. God keep my wife and children; if I am taken from their head, they will be poor indeed. I have contracted one or two serious debts, partly from my illness these many months, partly from too much thoughtlessness as to the expense when I came to town, that will cut in too much on the little I leave them in your hands. Remember me to my mother.—Yours,

R. B.

On the same day he wrote to his father-in-law:

TO MR JAMES ARMOUR, MAUCHLINE.

Brow, July 10, 1796.

For Heaven's sake, and as you value the welfare of your daughter and my wife, do, my dearest Sir, write to Fife to Mrs Armour to come if possible. My wife thinks she can yet reckon upon a fortnight. The

^{*} Cunningham was also the family name of the Earls of Glencairn.

† Here first printed from the MS. in the Watson Collection, National Portrait Gallery, Edinburgh. It is docketed: 'Burns to Cunningham, about a fortnight before the Bard's death.'

medical people order me, *as I value my existence*, to fly to sea-bathing and country-quarters, so it is ten thousand chances to one that I shall not be within a dozen miles of her when her hour comes. What a situation for her, poor girl, without a single friend by her on such a serious moment!

I have now been a week at salt-water, and though I think I have got some good by it, yet I have some secret fears that this business will be dangerous, if not fatal. Your most affectionate son, R. B.

For many months Mrs Dunlop had maintained an obstinate silence, notwithstanding Burns's frequent letters to her. The cause of her silence has not been explained, although various reasons have been offered. The poet now wrote to her for the last time.

TO MRS DUNLOP.

Brow, Tuesday, 12th July 1796.

MADAM—I have written you so often, without receiving any answer, that I would not trouble you again, but for the circumstances in which I am. An illness which has long hung about me in all probability will speedily send me beyond that *bourne whence no traveller returns*. Your friendship, with which for many years you honored me was a friendship dearest to my soul. Your conversation, and especially your correspondence, were at once highly entertaining and instructive. With what pleasure did I use to break up the seal! The remembrance yet adds one pulse more to my poor palpitating heart. Farewell!!!

R. B.

In a letter to Mrs Dunlop, written by John Lewars for Mrs Burns on 23d July, we are told that Burns had the pleasure of receiving an explanation of Mrs Dunlop's silence, and an assurance of the continuance of her friendship to his widow and children; but though her friendly attentions to them are undoubted, Mrs Burns denied that her husband received any explanation whatever of Mrs Dunlop's long silence.

After a few days, sea-bathing seemed to have in some degree eased the poet's pains, so that he once more began to entertain hopes of life. At this crisis he received a letter from a Dumfries solicitor, demanding payment of an account of £7, 4s., due, or overdue, to a draper for his volunteer uniform. It was generally believed of this tradesman by his contemporaries that he would

never have harassed the poet for the debt ; indeed, it has been represented that Mr Williamson (that was his name) * had placed this and some other overdue accounts in the hands of a solicitor merely because it seemed the most convenient mode of collecting them ; and Burns's eldest son declared that the letter addressed by Matthew Penn (the solicitor) to his father did not contain any threatening expressions. In Scotland, however, a letter from a solicitor is generally regarded as a menacing step on the part of a creditor ; and Burns was now too depressed in spirits and physically too weak to take a calm view of the situation. He bethought himself of two friends who, he naturally believed, would give him help.

TO MR JAMES BURNES, WRITER, MONTROSE.

DUMFRIES, 12th July.

MY DEAREST COUSIN—When you offered me money assistance, little did I think I should want it so soon. A rascal of a haberdasher, to whom I owe a considerable bill, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process against me and will infallibly put my emaciated body into jail. Will you be so good as to accommodate me, and that by return of post, with ten pounds ? O James ! did you know the pride of my heart, you would feel doubly for me ! Alas ! I am not used to beg ! The worst of it is my health was coming about finely, you know, and my physician assures me that melancholy and low spirits are half my disease : guess then my horrors when this business began ! If I had it settled, I would be, I think, quite well in a manner. How shall I use the language to you, Oh—do not disappoint me !—but strong necessity's curst command—

I have been thinking over and over my brother's affairs, and I fear I must cut him up ; but on this I will correspond at another time, particularly as I shall [require] your advice.

Forgive me for once more mention—by return of post. Save me from the horrors of a jail !

My compliments to my friend James† and to all the rest. I do not know what I have written. The subject is so horrible I dare not look it over again.—Farewell !

R. BURNS.

* Burns had been a debtor to Williamson on previous occasions, and does not appear to have been very prompt in his payments. In March 1794, Messrs Brown & Williamson, clothiers, announced to Burns that they were dissolving their copartnery and collecting the debts due to it. They enclosed an account for a balance of £7, 9s., due by him since the beginning of the preceding year.

† Son of Mr Burness, then a youth of sixteen, and afterwards the father of Sir Alexander Burnes, of Cabul fame ; he died in 1852.

ROBERT BURNS TO GEORGE THOMSON.

Brow, on the Solway Frith, 12th July 1796.

After all my boasted independence, eurst necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds. A cruel scoundrel of a Haberdasher, to whom I owe an account, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process and will infallibly put me into jail.* Do, for God's sake, send me that sum; and that by return of post. Forgive me this earnestness, but the horrors of a jail have made me half distracted. I do not ask all this gratuitously; for upon returning health, I hereby promise and engage to furnish you with five pounds' worth of the neatest song-genius you have seen. I tried my hand on 'Rothiemurchie' this morning. The measure is so difficult that it is impossible to infuse much genius into the lines—they are on the other side. Forgive, forgive me!—Yours,
R. BURNS.

It was to happy days spent on the banks of the Devon during the first blaze of his fame, and to Charlotte Hamilton and her youthful loveliness, that the poet's mind reverted at this gloomy time. These lines were his last composition.

FAIREST MAID ON DEVON BANKS.

TUNE—Rothiemurchie.

Full well thou knowest I love thee dear,
 Couldst thou to malice lend an ear?
 O did not Love exclaim 'Forbear,
 Nor use a faithful lover so.'

Chorus—Fairest maid on Devon banks,
 Chrystal Devon, winding Devon,
 Wilt thou lay that frown aside,
 And smile as thou wert wont to do?

Then come, thou fairest of the fair,
 Those wonted smiles O let me share;
 And by thy beauteous self I swear
 No love but thine my heart shall know.

James Burness, though not a rich man, immediately sent the sum

* Thomson has here added a note—which does him no credit: 'This idea is exaggerated; he would not have been in any such danger at Dumfries, nor could he be in such necessity to implore aid from Edinburgh.'

asked. Thomson, who was not much better off than Burns himself, made as prompt a response, and sent £5.

GEORGE THOMSON TO ROBERT BURNS.

[14th July 1796.]

MY DEAR SIR—Ever since I received your melancholy letters by Mrs Hyslop, I have been ruminating in what manner I could endeavour to alleviate your sufferings. Again and again I thought of a pecuniary offer, but the recollection of one of your letters on this subject, and the fear of offending your independent spirit, checked my resolution. I thank you heartily, therefore, for the frankness of your letter of the 12th, and with great pleasure enclose a draft for the very sum I proposed sending. Would I were Chancellor of the Exchequer but for one day, for your sake!

Pray, my good Sir, is it not possible for you to muster a volume of poetry? If too much trouble to you in the present state of your health, some literary friend might be found here, who would select and arrange from your manuscripts and take upon him the task of editor. In the meantime, it could be advertised to be published by subscription. Do not shun this mode of obtaining the value of your labour; remember Pope published the *Iliad* by subscription. Think of this, my dear Burns, and do not reckon me intrusive with my advice. You are too well convinced of the respect and friendship I bear you, to impute anything I say to an unworthy motive. Yours faithfully, G. T.

The verses to 'Rothiemurchie' will answer finely. I am happy to see you can still tune your lyre.

James Gracie, banker in Dumfries, sent to inquire after the poet's health and to offer his carriage to bring him home.*

TO JAMES GRACIE, ESQ.

Brow, Wednesday Morn, [13th July].

MY DEAR SIR—It would be doing high injustice to this place not to acknowledge that my rheumatisms have derived great benefit from it already; but, alas! my loss of appetite still continues. I shall not need your kind offer *this* week, and I return to town the beginning of next week, it not being a tide-week. I am detaining a man in a burning hurry. So, God bless you! R. B.

Mrs Burns's condition had of course prevented her from accompanying her husband to Brow. He addressed her thus, apparently on the 14th:

* There is some reason to believe that this friend offered Burns pecuniary aid as well. This was stated, on the authority of the poet's eldest son, in a letter written to Dr Robert Chambers in February 1851 by J. Campbell Gracie, the banker's grandson.

TO MRS BURNS.

Brow, Thursday.

MY DEAREST LOVE—I delayed writing until I could tell you what effect sea-bathing was likely to produce. It would be injustice to deny that it has eased my pains, and, I think, has strengthened me; but my appetite is still extremely bad. No flesh nor fish can I swallow; porridge and milk is the only thing I can taste. I am very happy to hear, by [letter from] Miss Jessie Lewars, that you are all well. My very best and kindest compliments to her and to all the children. I will see you on Sunday. Your affectionate husband, R. B.

TO JOHN CLARK, ESQ., LOCHERWOODS.

[Brow,] Saturday noon, [16 July].

MY DEAR SIR—My hours of bathing have interfered so unluckily as to have put it out of my power to wait on you. In the meantime, as the tides are over, I anxiously wish to return to town, as I have not heard any news of Mrs Burns these two days. Dare I be so bold as to borrow your gig? I have a horse at command, but it threatens to rain; and getting wet is perdition. Any time about three in the afternoon will suit me exactly. Yours most gratefully and sincerely,

R. BURNS.

John M'Diarmid, of Dumfries, communicated the following to Mr Lockhart: 'Rousseau, we all know, when dying, wished to be carried into the open air, that he might obtain a parting look of the glorious orb of day. A night or two before Burns left Brow, he drank tea with Mrs Craig, widow of the minister of Ruthwell. His altered appearance excited much silent sympathy; and the evening being beautiful, and the sun shining brightly through the casement, Miss Craig—after Mrs Henry Duncan*—was afraid the light might be too much for him, and rose with the view of letting down the window-blinds. Burns immediately guessed what she meant; and, regarding the young lady with a look of great benignity, said: "Thank you, my dear, for your kind attention; but oh, let him shine: he will not shine long for me!"'

Before leaving Brow Burns had a fresh attack of fever. Ac-

* Mrs Duncan was the wife of Dr Henry Duncan, minister of Ruthwell, the originator of savings-banks in Scotland, the rescuer of the now famous Ruthwell Cross, and the first describer of reptilian footprints on the surfaces of ancient strata.

according to Allan Cunningham, who was living in Dumfries at the time, the poet 'returned on the 18th, in a small spring-cart. The ascent to his house was steep, and the cart stopped at the foot of the Mill-hole-brae: when he alighted, he shook much, and stood with difficulty; he seemed unable to stand upright. He stooped as if in pain, and walked tottering towards his own door: his looks were hollow and ghastly, and those who saw him then expected never to see him in life again.' Dr Currie, who is believed to have received information upon the subject from Dr Maxwell, says: 'At this time a tremor pervaded his frame; his tongue was parched, and his mind sank into delirium when not roused by conversation.'

On his arrival Burns wrote what is supposed to be the last letter or composition of any kind penned by him. It was addressed to his father-in-law:

TO MR JAMES ARMOUR, MAUCHLINE.

DUMFRIES, *Monday, 18th July.*

MY DEAR SIR—Do, for Heaven's sake, send Mrs Armour here immediately. My wife is hourly expecting to be put to bed. Good God! what a situation for her to be in, poor girl,* without a friend! I returned from sea-bathing quarters to-day and my medical friends would almost persuade me that I am better; but I think and feel that my strength is so gone that the disorder will prove fatal to me. Your son-in-law,

R. B.

The life of Burns was now to be measured by hours rather than days. To secure quietness in the house, his four little boys were sent to John Lewars's house. Jessy tended the sick man assiduously. Findlater came occasionally to soothe the last moments of his friend. Early in the morning of the 21st Burns sank into delirium, and it became evident that nature was well-nigh exhausted. Dr Maxwell, who had watched by his bed the greater part of the night, had left, and the only persons who remained in the room were a couple of sympathetic neighbours. The children were sent for to see their father for the last time in life. They stood round the bed, while calmly and gradually he sank into his last repose. The eldest son subsequently declared that his father's last words were a muttered execration against the law

* Mrs Burns was not yet thirty years of age.

agent whose letter had embittered the closing scene of his life. His mother, however, in the latest years of her life, questioned the accuracy of this statement, and it is at least possible that the son—he was only a boy of ten—may have misunderstood his father's last ejaculation.*

* In this connection may be introduced one of the many curious stories which have been circulated about Burns's latest days, and which was first given publicity to by Mr Alex. Taylor Innes, advocate, Edinburgh, in 1872, in the course of a correspondence between him and a writer styling himself 'Aliquanto Latior' in the *Scotsman*. This correspondence was privately printed in 1873 under the title of *Burns and the Ayrshire Moderates*. Mr Innes tells the story thus :

'To one version of the story I attach very high authority, though it passes through a number of hands. I am fortunate in being permitted to transcribe it from the handwriting of the Rev. Dr Henderson of Glasgow, on whose (in every point of view) very high authority I learn that it is "almost verbatim" as received by him from Dr John Muir of Glasgow, who used to tell it seemingly with scrupulous accuracy, as narrated to him by Mr M'Whirr, the parish minister of Urr, who had it direct from Burns's confidant. His name is not given, but Dr Muir described him as a gentleman belonging to Dumfriesshire or Dumfries, and "a man of Christian character;" and I have heard him more than once said to have been a medical man. I give the narrative verbatim, with a few variations in notes :

"A few days before Burns's death, this gentleman, Mr M'Whirr's informant, was going into Dumfries, when he found Burns sitting by the wayside [on a stone-heap, it is sometimes said], and in great weakness. On his inquiring about his health, Burns replied that he was very ill indeed, and proceeded to expatiate on his complaints. The friend asked him if he knew of anything that might relieve him. Burns said : 'I think a drink of porter would do me good.' 'If so,' said his friend, 'put your arm in mine, and we will walk forward to the toll-bar, and you'll soon have that.' On his having taken a draught of the porter, Burns said : 'That is very refreshing;' but almost immediately added : 'Yet it only goes so far. I feel something deeper wrong with me, which it does not reach to, and which tells me I have not long to live.' This was followed by the expression of his anxiety about the future. 'Oh, what would I not give for more time' (or 'for more light') 'before I pass into the unseen world.' On this, his friend, himself a man of Christian faith, as Mr M'Whirr said to Dr Muir, directed him to the Saviour, who died for us, and who rose again. Burns sadly shook his head, and said : 'It is now a long time since I had any faith to put there;' and went on to tell when and how he had lost it. 'When I was a lad about eighteen, living in my father's house at Mauchline (Tarbolton?) he used to send me often into Ayr to collect payment of accounts from his customers for the produce of his farm. Among these was Dr —, one of the ministers of Ayr. Having called on him on this errand, as I was leaving he said to me : "Young man, are you the author of some lines that I have got here?" And having brought them out of his desk he put them into my hand. Not being at that time a poet confessed, I tried to evade an answer, and said : "Where did you get them?" He replied : "No matter, did you write them?" [They are said to have been scribbled on the back of the meal or other account which Burns absently handed in to this customer.] Being brought to my confession, he said : "Young man, if you are the author of these lines, let me tell you that you are possessed of a very uncommon genius, and if you improve it rightly are destined to rise to great distinction; and let me advise you to take care that you do it all justice, particularly that you do not allow it to be cramped with the popular theology of the day."

'This last advice was expanded; but Dr Henderson declines to charge his memory with more of it as told him, except that the theology of the Shorter Catechism was specified. Before quoting Dr Muir's narrative of Burns's next words, I may mention that the poet is said afterwards to have described the intense intoxication which this, the first appreciation and praise which he had ever experienced, produced. "I did not know whether I was on my head or my feet as I walked out." But to resume what bears to be his own narrative :

Burns's death caused a general feeling of regret throughout Dumfries and its neighbourhood. Many knew well the generous character of the man. All deplored the premature extinction of a spirit which, but a few years before, had flashed upon the world so brilliant a light, and sympathised with the young widow and her helpless children, left almost destitute. Among the public in general * the same sentiments of regret and

"Leaving the minister with astonishment, and thinking of the meaning of what he had said to me as I was on my way home I said to myself: 'Well, the minister kens better than me; and, if there be any truth in these things, what is the use of my trying to keep my passions under restraint?' And so from that day I threw off all restraint, and went headlong." [Or some such phrase expressing liberation. Dr Muir seems not to be sure of the words of this last clause.]

Mr Taylor Innes adds: 'It is open to any one to argue that Burns was mistaken as to the meaning of the advice he got on this and other occasions from his clerical friends. That he got the advice—that the incident happened—I have no doubt. Dr M'Kinlay, for example, used to narrate it all his life as a well-known fact.'—*'Aliquanto Latior'*—Dr John Gairdner, a well-known surgeon, citizen, and political reformer of Edinburgh, and grand-nephew of Dr William Dalrymple, who is 'one of the ministers of Ayr' mentioned in the story—questions the truth of the statement alleged to have been made by Burns to a Dumfries gentleman, who repeated it to Mr M'Whirr of Urr, who in his turn repeated it to Dr John Muir of Glasgow, who again repeated it to Dr Henderson of Glasgow, who finally gave it in writing to Mr Innes. He asks: 'Is it credible that so early a recognition of Burns's talents, if it really occurred, should not have been heard of by Currie or by any of Burns's numerous biographers, nor related by himself or his brother, though it had caused him such intense gratification?' Regarding the 'corroboration' of the story by Dr M'Kinlay, *'Aliquanto Latior'* remarks—and this statement has not been denied—'Dr M'Kinlay is not producible as a witness against the religious character of Burns, or of "D'rymple mild," or of any one else. There is a chapter of his history which, though locally well known, has, in consequence of feelings of delicacy, never been made publicly prominent. He was long since, but after the time of Burns, and when he was of ripe years, brought under the notice of the church authorities for a scandalous offence—not heresy, but far worse—and was punished all too leniently, but still sufficiently to mark him as a man who had no right to prefer charges of irreligion against any other.' *'Aliquanto Latior'* further points out that there is no evidence of Burns having 'gone headlong' till many years after he reached eighteen—if, indeed, he can be said with truth to have ever 'gone headlong' at all. In *'Remarks on the Correspondence'* which appear in the brochure already mentioned, it is pertinently pointed out that 'before his eighteenth year Burns had not produced any of his most remarkable poems; not, indeed, till long after, especially not one of those pointed at the religious parties, customs, or character. It is difficult to see how the minister, or any one meeting with such songs as "Handsome Nell" or "Tibbie, I hae seen the day" could have thought of a possibility that the youthful author was likely to write on the "theology of the day" or "Shorter Catechism."' It may be added that the entire story is fatally discredited by the statement that Burns told it 'a few days before his death, and sitting by the wayside.' It is absolutely certain that after he returned from the Brow Well Burns was unable to leave his house.

* 'On the 21st inst., died at Dumfries, after a lingering illness, the celebrated ROBERT BURNS. His poetical compositions, distinguished equally by the force of native humour, by the warmth and the tenderness of passion, and by the glowing touches of a descriptive pencil—will remain a lasting monument of the vigour and versatility of a mind guided only by the Lights of Nature and the Inspirations of Genius. The public, to whose amusement he has so largely contributed, will hear with regret that his extraordinary endowments were accompanied with frailties which rendered them useless to

sympathy prevailed. The nation seemed to feel at its heart a pang of self-reproach for having failed to appreciate and foster a genius so extraordinary.

The funeral of Burns is thus described by Dr Currie: 'The Gentlemen Volunteers of Dumfries determined to bury their illustrious associate with military honours, and every preparation was made to render this last service solemn and impressive. The Fencible Infantry of Angusshire, and the regiment of cavalry of the Cinque Ports, at that time quartered in Dumfries,* offered their assistance on this occasion; the principal inhabitants of the town and neighbourhood determined to walk in the funeral procession; and a vast concourse of persons assembled, some of them from a considerable distance, to witness the obsequies of the Scottish bard. On the evening of the 25th of July the remains of Burns were removed from his house to the Town Hall, and the funeral took place on the succeeding day.† A party of the Volunteers, selected to perform the military duty in the churchyard, stationed themselves in the front of the procession, with their arms reversed; the main body of the corps surrounded and supported the coffin, on which were placed the hat and sword of their friend and fellow-soldier; the numerous body of attendants ranged themselves in the rear; while the Fencible regiments of infantry and cavalry lined the streets from the Town Hall to the burial-ground in the southern churchyard, a distance of more than half a mile. The whole procession moved forward to that sublime

himself and his family. The last moments of his short life were spent in sickness and indigence; and his widow, with five infant children, and in hourly expectation of a sixth, is now left without any resource but what she may hope from the regard due to the memory of her husband.

'The public are respectfully informed that contributions for the wife and family of the late Robert Burns, who are left in circumstances of extreme distress, will be received at the houses of Sir William Forbes & Co., of Messrs Mansfield, Ramsay & Co., and at the shops of the Edinburgh booksellers.

'As it is proposed to publish, some time hence, a posthumous volume of the poetical remains of Robert Burns, for the benefit of the author's family, his friends and acquaintances are requested to transmit such poems and *letters* as happen to be in their possession to Alexander Cunningham, writer, George's Street, Edinburgh; or to John Syme, Esq., of Ryedale, Dumfries.'—*Edinburgh Advertiser*, July 26.

* The Cinque Ports Cavalry had arrived in Dumfries only a few days before the death of Burns. Among the junior officers was the Hon. Mr Jenkinson, afterwards Earl of Liverpool and prime minister of England.

† The *Edinburgh Advertiser* of Friday the 29th contains a paragraph, dated 'Dumfries, 26th July,' which says that 'the remains of Burns were interred on *Monday*, with military honours and every suitable respect.' Monday was the 25th, and this undoubtedly was the day of the funeral.

and affecting strain of music, the Dead March in *Saul* ; and three volleys fired over his grave marked the return of Burns to his parent earth ! The spectacle was in a high degree grand and solemn, and accorded with the general sentiments of sympathy and sorrow which the occasion had called forth.' On the day of her husband's funeral Mrs Burns gave birth to a son. This child, named Maxwell, in honour of Dr Maxwell, the physician who had attended Burns on his death-bed, died in infancy.

BURNS—AFTER DEATH.

IT is not so surprising that Burns died poor and almost indigent as that he left so comparatively trifling an amount of debt.* The money realised by his Poems appears to have been expended by the time he left Ellisland: he obtained nothing more from that source except the small sum thrust upon him by Thomson. He had lived four and a half years in Dumfries on an ascertained income which probably never rose above £90 a year, † with a family of seven or eight persons to support, and this at a time when the necessaries of life were unusually dear; and yet he had exercised so much prudence and self-denial that only a few pounds stood

* It has been repeatedly stated that Burns died free of debt. This, even by his own confession (letter to his brother, July 10, 1796), is not strictly true. He owed small sums to various tradesmen, as well as a balance of rent to his landlord, Captain Hamilton. Probably, however, the total amount of his debts did not much exceed thirty pounds. The following letter from Gilbert Burns to Mr Wallace, writer in Dumfries, throws some light on the subject, while still further confirming the fact that Mr James Clarke, the schoolmaster, was a debtor of Burns:

MOSSGIEL, 1st Jan. 1797.

MR WALLACE.—Sir—I intended to have been in Dumfries about this time, to have paid off my brother's debts; but I find much difficulty in sparing as much money. I think of offering Captain Hamilton and Mr Williamson the half of their accts, and begging a little time to pay the other half. If Mr Clark pay up his bill, I hope to be able to pay off the smaller accts. I beg you will write me your opinion immediately on this subject. Will you have the goodness to mention this to them, which will save me some uneasiness when I come to Dumfries, which I think will be in two or three weeks, unless I have occasion to delay it till Dumfries fair? I beg that you will smooth the way to me in this business as much as you can. I do feel much hurt at it; but, as I suppose the delay can be no great inconvenience to the gentlemen, I hope they will be indulgent to me.—I am, sir, your most obedt humble sert.

GILBERT BURNS.

† Currie.

at his debit when he died. On the other side of the account we find the £180 which he had advanced from the profits of his Poems to his brother, books to the value of about £90, and his household furniture. The draft for £10 sent by Mr Burness, and that for £5 sent by Mr Thomson, lay unrealised in the widow's possession, and formed the subject of a legal writ issued by the Commissary of Dumfries on the ensuing 6th of October, confirming to her, 'executrix *qua* relicto to the umquhile Robert Burns,' the use of the sums which they represented.

While Burns lay dead in his house, his friend Lewars wrote to Mr Burness of Montrose informing him of the melancholy event, and apologising for the delay in answering his late kind communication, on the ground that, at the time it was received, 'Mr Burns was totally unable either to write or dictate a letter.' Mr Burness immediately sent a letter of the kindest condolence to the widow. He was not a rich man, and he had a family of his own to provide for; yet, apparently as a simple matter of course, he offered to relieve the widow of the charge of her eldest son, and to educate him with his own children; and he enclosed an additional sum of £5, to relieve her immediate necessities. Adverting, further, to what the poet had told him of his brother Gilbert's debt, he advised her, as far as circumstances permitted, to 'use lenity in settling with him.' Mrs Burns replied in grateful terms, but declined, in the meantime, to part with any of her children: she heartily concurred in Mr Burness's suggestion about Gilbert's debt. The latter, who had long struggled under great difficulties at Mossgiel, made up his mind at his brother's death to sell off all he possessed in order to discharge the debt he owed to the destitute Dumfries family. But the poet's widow, forgetful of her own pressing need, resolutely forbade this step. The money was not paid up till twenty-four years after, and even then without interest. It must be remembered, however, that, during the whole time of its currency, Gilbert had maintained his mother, receiving, so far as is known, no contribution from Robert for that purpose, and that he had also taken charge of the poet's eldest son for several years.

Immediately after the death of Burns, his friend Syme began to exert himself with the greatest zeal to arouse public sympathy

for the widow and children. With him was associated in his task Dr William Maxwell, the poet's medical attendant, a man in political opinions and sociability decidedly after his own heart.

Alexander Cunningham, Burns's principal Edinburgh friend, associated himself with Syme and Maxwell. One or other of the three was, in all probability, the author of the newspaper announcement which has been quoted.*

Syme had an old college friend in practice as a physician at Liverpool, a man of literary talent, whom affinity of taste had brought into intimacy with the well-known author, Mr William Roscoe of that town. This was Dr James Currie, who had hitherto enjoyed only a dubious fame as the supposed author of *Jasper Wilson's Letter to Mr Pitt*, a pamphlet in which the war had been deprecated with an energy far from pleasing to the administration. Currie, who was the son of a Scottish clergyman, and a native of Annan, had read with avidity Burns's Poems on their first appearance, and had had a casual interview with the poet at Dumfries in 1792. On hearing of the death of Burns, he expressed to Syme a strong interest in the intended subscription and also in the preparation of a 'Life' and an edition of the posthumous works of the poet. Within a month he collected forty or fifty guineas for the family. At the same time he wrote about the proposed publication in such terms as amounted to an offer of his own literary assistance to any extent that might be desired. There was some uncertainty at first as to the selection of an editor and biographer. Professor Dugald Stewart was thought of. So was Mrs Walter Riddel. Dr Currie pressed Syme to take the matter up. But it was finally settled, in September, that the duty should devolve upon Dr Currie himself.

Meanwhile the subscription went on, but not very rapidly. In Dumfriesshire a sum of somewhat more than £100 was contributed within the first three months. In Liverpool Dr Currie secured seventy guineas. The Edinburgh total had not by the end of the year risen much above the latter sum, though Burns had there had many admirers and not a few friends. It does not appear, however, that any efforts were made in Scotland beyond the publication of advertisements in the newspapers. In London more

* See p. 280.

was done, and the entire sum realised was £700, including donations of £100 each by Sir Francis Burdett and Mr James Shaw (afterwards Sir James, and Chamberlain of London), who took upon himself the whole trouble connected with the London subscription. The total was subsequently raised by Mr Shaw's exertions to £1200, with which stock was purchased and handed over to the provost and bailies of Ayr, £800 to be appropriated to the use of Mrs Burns and her three sons, and £400 to the use of the poet's two natural daughters, each of whom received £200 on marriage.

During the latter part of 1796 Syme was busy collecting Burns's letters and fugitive poems, and met with considerable success. Mrs Dunlop gave up her letters in exchange for her own to Burns. Clarinda kept hers, but promised to transcribe and forward a few passages from them, provided her own letters to Burns were returned.* Robert Aiken had gathered together many of the poet's communications: but the bundle was stolen by an unfaithful clerk, and, it is feared, destroyed, to prevent detection. The mass collected by Syme was transmitted to Dr Currie in February 1797. 'I received,' says Currie, 'the complete sweepings of his drawers and of his desk—as it appeared to me—even to the copy-book on which his little boy had been practising his writing.'

George Thomson readily gave up the sixty songs Burns had sent him for the *Melodies of Scotland*, and even the valuable series of letters which the poet had addressed to him regarding Scottish songs; and in order that this new matter might be quite fresh in Currie's edition—only six of the songs had already appeared in the *Melodies*—he kept back his own work for a con-

* In a letter to Mr Syme, written at this time, Mrs M'Lehose says:

'What can have impressed such an idea upon you, as that I ever conceived the most distant intention to destroy these precious memorials of an acquaintance, the recollection of which would influence me were I to live till fourscore. Be assured, I never will suffer one of them to perish. This I give you my solemn word of honour upon; nay, more, on condition that you send me my letters, I will select such passages from our dear Bard's letters as will do honour to his memory, and cannot hurt my own fame even with the most rigid.'

In another letter of the 9th January 1797, to the same correspondent, she says:

'It rejoices me to hear so large a sum is to come from other places—and [I] join you in reprobating Caledonia's capital for her shabby donation. But there are few souls *anywhere* who understood or could enter into the relish of such a character as B.'s. There was an electricity about him, which could only touch or pervade a *few*, cast in nature's finest mould.'

siderable time. His conduct was fully appreciated by the Burns family.*

Of the 180 songs sent in Burns's own handwriting to Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum*, only forty-seven were finally pronounced by Dr Currie to be wholly and solely Burns's. The poet himself, though the magnitude of Johnson's collection seems to have disposed him to regard it as 'the text-book and standard of Scottish song and music,' felt ashamed of much that he had contributed to it. 'Here, once for all,' said he, in a letter to Mr Thomson, 'let me apologise for the many silly compositions of mine in this work. Many beautiful airs wanted words, and in the hurry of other avocations, if I could string a parcel of rhymes together, anything near tolerable, I was fain to let them pass!' On the other hand, a considerable number of his contributions to Johnson were equal

* Gilbert Burns wrote Thomson as follows, on receiving the present of a volume of his collection of songs :

TO MR GEORGE THOMSON, TRUSTEES' OFFICE, EDINBURGH.

DINNING, 14th March 1800.

SIR—I received your very acceptable present of your songs, which calls for my warmest thanks. If ever I come to Edinburgh, I will certainly avail myself of your invitation, to call on a person whose handsome conduct to my brother's family has secured my esteem, and confirmed to me the opinion, that musical taste and talents have a close connection with the harmony of the moral feelings. I am unwilling indeed to believe that the motions of every one's heart are dark as Erebus to whom Dame Nature has denied a good ear and musical capacity, as her ladyship has been pleased to endow myself but scantily in these particulars; but 'happy the swain who possesses it, happy his cot, and happy the sharer of it.' To the sharer of yours, I beg you will present my most cordial congratulations. My sister-in-law begs me to present her best thanks to you for her copy, and to assure you that, however little she may have expressed it, she has a proper sense of the kind attention you have so kindly shewn her.—I am, dear sir, with the highest esteem, your most obedient humble servant,

GILBERT BURNS.

Thomson's work extended to five volumes, of which an octavo edition was subsequently published, and, after a long interval, he added a sixth volume in 1841, the work having thus occupied in its preparation and publication not much less than half a century. Thomson retired from the principal clerkship of the Trustees' Office in 1839, after having filled it for fifty-eight years. On the 3d of March 1847, a silver vase, purchased by one hundred gentlemen of Edinburgh, was presented to him, as a mark of their respect and esteem. On that occasion Lord Cockburn spoke of 'the protracted life which had been devoted, in one course of unchanging gentleness, to public and private duty.' In his official capacity, 'in everything that related to the advancement of the useful and the elegant arts, he was an instructor and a guide; and if there was a single young man who had the promise of merit united with a humble disposition, it was to Mr Thomson he looked for counsel, and it was his house that was always ready to receive him.' As to the imputations in connection with the history of Burns [to the effect that Thomson had treated the poet shabbily in his pecuniary dealings], Lord Cockburn said that he had long ago studied the matter with as much candour as any man could apply to any subject in which he was not personally interested; and his 'clear conviction was, not only that all these imputations were groundless, but that, if placed now in the same situation in which he was then, nothing different or better could be done.'

to the best of his compositions, and had already attained popularity.

The Works of Robert Burns, with an Account of his Life, and a Criticism on his Writings, by James Currie, M.D., appeared in April 1800, in four volumes 8vo, and had a great success. Four editions, of 2000 copies each, were disposed of in the first four years. The first was printed at Liverpool, by John M'Creery, a North-of-Ireland man of Scottish extraction. He is described as a man of talent and ardent temperament, a lover of literature, and a worshipper of genius. He did his best to make the volumes a beautiful example of the typographic art, and succeeded to general admiration.* The profits of the work are stated by Mr Wallace Currie to have been £1200; but in Dr Currie's own papers reference is made to the sum of £1400 as having been realised for the widow and family by the publication.

Mrs Burns lived on in the small house in which her husband died, her modest and amiable character winning for her the respect of the whole community. The proceeds of the fund raised for her enabled her to bring up her sons in a creditable manner. Dr Currie paid her a visit in June 1804, when 'everything about her,' he says, 'bespoke decent competence, and even comfort. She shewed me the study and small library of her husband nearly as he left them. By everything I hear, she conducts herself irreproachably.' He adds: 'From Mrs Burns's house, I went to the churchyard, at no great distance, to visit the grave of the poet. As it is still uninscribed, we could not have found it had not a person we met with in the churchyard pointed it out. He told us he knew Burns well, and that he (Burns) himself chose the spot in which he is buried. His grave is on the north-east corner of the churchyard, which it fills up, and at the side of the grave of his two sons, Wallace and Maxwell.'

Mrs Burns erected on the grave a plain tombstone, inscribed simply with the name and age of the poet. But in 1815 a costly mausoleum was built by public subscription on the highest spot in the churchyard, and on the 12th September the remains of the poet and of Wallace and Maxwell were transferred to it. The original

* Ten copies were printed on thicker and finer paper than the rest—of which four were for the brother and three sisters of Burns, one for Syme, one for George Thomson, one for Murdoch (the poet's teacher), and one for Mr Roscoe.

tombstone is sunk under the pavement of the mausoleum, and the original grave is occupied by the eldest daughter of Mrs Dunlop, Mrs Perochon, who died in October 1825.

The poet's widow survived him thirty-eight years, living on in the house Burns died in. In 1817 Mr Maule of Panmure (afterwards Lord Panmure) settled £50 a year on her, but her son James was able, within a year and a half, to relieve him of the obligation he had spontaneously taken on himself, and Mrs Burns spent her latter days in comparative affluence ; yet 'never changed nor wished to change her place.' She was paralysed, and her speech was affected some years before her death, which occurred on 26th March 1834.* When the mausoleum was opened for her interment, Burns's skull was temporarily removed, and a cast was taken from it, on which George Combe wrote an elaborate 'phrenological' report. On the lid of the coffin being removed, 'There,' says Mr McDiarmid, 'lay the remains of the great poet, to all appearance entire, retaining various traces of recent vitality, or, to speak more correctly, exhibiting the features of one who had recently sunk into the sleep of death. The forehead struck every one as beautifully arched, if not so high as might reasonably have been supposed, while the scalp was rather thickly covered with hair, and the teeth perfectly firm and white. Altogether, the scene was so imposing that the commonest workmen stood uncovered, as the late Dr Gregory did at the exhumation of the remains of King Robert Bruce, and for some moments remained inactive, as if thrilling under

* The household effects of Mrs Burns were sold by public auction, and brought uncommonly large sums, owing to the anxiety of the public to possess relics of the household. According to the *Dumfries Courier*, 'the auctioneer commenced with small articles, and when he came to a broken copper coffee-pot, there were so many bidders that the price paid exceeded twenty-fold the intrinsic value. A tea-kettle of the same metal succeeded and reached £2 sterling. Of the linens, a tablecloth, marked 1792, which, speaking commercially, may be worth half-a-crown or five shillings, was knocked down at £5, 7s. Many other articles commanded handsome prices, and the older and plainer the furniture, the better it sold. The rusty iron top of a shower-bath, which Mrs Dunlop of Dunlop sent to the poet when afflicted with rheumatism, was bought by a Carlisle gentleman for £1, 8s.; and a low wooden kitchen-chair, on which the late Mrs Burns sat when nursing her children, was run up to £3, 7s. The crystal and china were much coveted, and brought, in most cases, splendid prices. Even an old fender reached a figure which would go far to buy half-a-dozen new ones, and everything towards the close attracted notice, down to greybeards, bottles, and a half-worn pair of bellows. The poet's eight-day clock, made by a Mauchline artist, attracted great attention, from the circumstance that it had frequently been wound up by his own hand. In a few seconds it was bid up to £15 or guineas, and was finally disposed of for £35. The purchaser had a hard battle to fight; but his spirit was good, and his purse obviously not a light one, and the story ran that he had instructed Mr Richardson to secure a preference at any sum under £60.'

the effects of some undefinable emotion while gazing on all that remained of one "whose fame is wide as the world itself." But the scene, however imposing, was brief; for the instant the workmen inserted a shell beneath the original wooden coffin, the head separated from the trunk, and the whole body, with the exception of the bones, crumbled into dust.'

Mr Archibald Blacklock, surgeon, who was present at the exhumation, drew up the following description of the skull: 'The cranial bones were perfect in every respect, if we except a little erosion of their external table, and firmly held together by their sutures; even the delicate bones of the orbits, with the trifling exception of the *os unguis* in the left, were sound, and uninjured by death and the grave. The superior maxillary bones still retained the four most posterior teeth on each side, including the *dentes sapientiæ*, and all without spot or blemish; the incisores, *cuspidati*, &c., had in all probability recently dropped from the jaw, for the *alveoli* were but little decayed. The bones of the face and palate were also sound. Some small portions of black hair, with a very few gray hairs intermixed, were observed while detaching some extraneous matter from the occiput. Indeed, nothing could exceed the high state of preservation in which we found the bones of the cranium, or offer a fairer opportunity of supplying what has so long been desiderated by phrenologists—a correct model of our immortal poet's head: and in order to accomplish this in the most accurate and satisfactory manner, every particle of sand, or other foreign body, was carefully washed off, and the plaster of Paris applied with all the tact and accuracy of an experienced artist. The cast is admirably taken, and cannot fail to prove highly interesting to phrenologists and others.

'Having completed our intention, the skull, securely enclosed in a leaden case, was again committed to the earth, precisely where we found it.

ARCHIBALD BLACKLOCK.'

The loan of £180 which Burns made to his brother Gilbert out of the proceeds of the first Edinburgh edition of his poems was not repaid till 1820, and it was then not appropriated by the widow, but applied to the relief of another member of the family. Gilbert raised the money by an edition of his brother's works. When

the fourteen years' copyright of Dr Currie's edition expired, and other publishers began to reprint it, Messrs Cadell & Davies were anxious to maintain a preference in the market for their own impressions, and bethought them of an edition with notes and emendations by the poet's surviving brother. He was the more ready to do what they wished that he had now been convinced by two of his brother's surviving intimates, Messrs Gray and Findlater, that Dr Currie had done injustice to the poet's memory. A negotiation was entered upon, which excited some attention in unexpected quarters. Wordsworth issued a pamphlet, in the form of a letter to Mr Gray, discussing the whole question of the biographer's duty to his subject, especially in regard to the extent to which it was proper to go in laying bare faults and failings. He avowed his indignation at the revelation of the 'infirmities' of Burns made by Dr Currie, and professed a desire to see this evil corrected. Gilbert Burns, while he felt annoyed at Wordsworth's interference, resolved to follow his suggestions. This brought forth an indignant protest from Mr Roscoe against the imputation of faults to his friend Dr Currie, whose work, he said, had been, at its publication, approved of by none more heartily than by Gilbert Burns. Gilbert explained that, at the time when Dr Currie's book came out, he supposed that the biographer had spoken of his brother's errors upon good information. He himself, having for the last few years of the poet's life lived fifty miles off, had no opportunity of knowing how the case really stood: he therefore approved of Dr Currie's memoir at the time: but afterwards, from what he had learnt from Mr Findlater, he became convinced that the statements had been exaggerated.

The edition which Gilbert Burns consequently prepared, and which appeared in 1820, was, from the publisher's point of view, a failure. Messrs Cadell & Davies from the first desired a mass of fresh information, to illustrate both poet's life and his poems. When Gilbert Burns, in reply to their inquiry, asked £500 for his services as editor, they naturally expected that he was in a position to give them enough of new matter to make an edition that would take and keep the first place in the market, and accepted his terms, which he had fixed at £500 at the instigation of Mr Gray, he himself naïvely declaring that he 'scarcely could muster impudence to name' so large a sum. Their disappointment must have

been great when they found that their editor furnished only a very few meagre notes, did not admit any pieces excluded by Currie, and distinguished his edition from the old one chiefly by inserting two letters on the poet's character from Gray and Findlater, and a dissertation from his own pen on the effect of the Scottish national religion upon the Scottish national character. In reality, as only one edition was printed, the money paid to Gilbert was £250, the other half of the stipulated sum being contingent upon a reprint.

VERSICLES AND FRAGMENTS.

BURNS through life was much given to impromptu verse-making, his favourite form being the epigram or epitaph. Having provided himself in Edinburgh with a diamond for writing on glass, he often scribbled these hasty productions on the windows of inns and taverns. In the present work many of these versicles which are connected with the poet's biography are presented at their proper places ; such others as have been recovered are here given.

EPITAPHS.

ON JAMES GRIEVE, LAIRD OF BOGHEAD,* TARBOLTON.

Here lies Boghead among the dead,
In hopes to get salvation ;
But if such as he in Heav'n may be,
Then welcome—hail ! damnation.

A similar turn of thought occurs in an epitaph

ON GAVIN HAMILTON.

The poor man weeps—here Gavin sleeps
Whom canting wretches blamed :
But with such as he, where'er he be,
May I be saved or damned !

* Boghead lies west from Lochlea.

ON ROBERT AIKEN, ESQ.

Know thou, O stranger to the fame
 Of this much-loved, much-honoured name !
 (For none that knew him need be told)
 A warmer heart Death ne'er made cold.

ON A CELEBRATED RULING ELDER.*

Here souter Hood in death does sleep—	cobbler
To hell, if he's gane thither,	
Satan, gie him thy gear to keep,	money
He'll haud it weel thegither.	hold

ON WEE JOHNNY.†

HIC JACET WEE JOHNNY.

Whoe'er thou art, O reader, know
 That Death has murdered Johnny !
 And here his body lies fu' low—
 For saul he ne'er had ony.

It is curious that in an old work, *Nugæ Venales sive Thesaurus ridendi et jocandi*, &c., bearing date 1663, but no place or publisher's name, there is an epigram in Latin turning upon exactly the same jest :

'Oh Deus omnipotens, vituli miserere Joannis,
 Quem mors præveniens non sinit esse bovem :
 Corpus in Italia est, habet intestina Brabantus,
 Ast animam nemo : Cur ? quia non habuit.'

* This epitaph is inserted in the First Common-place Book, under title 'Epitaph on Wm. Hood, Scur., in Tarbolton.'

† Wee Johnny was for long supposed to be John Wilson, printer of the Kilmarnock Edition. This view is now seldom taken. In or near Mauchline there seem to have been several men of the name of John Wilson to whom these lines might have been applied with more or less appropriateness. Local tradition associates them generally with a grocer who did a little bookselling, and who was more notable for his diminutive stature than his intellectual capacity.

Among Burns's acquaintance at Mauchline was a mason named James Humphry, who, if devoid of the genius of the poet, had at least an equal flow of language and a remarkable gift for theological controversy. Burns and he came frequently into collision on the subject of New Light, and it appears that the mason entertained somewhat strong views both about the poet's heterodoxy and about his morals. Burns, passing along the village street one evening, and seeing Humphry lounging at a corner, stopped for a moment, and asked the news. 'Oh, nothing very particular on earth,' answered the polemic; 'but there's strange news from *below*.' 'Ah! what's that?' inquired Burns, opening his eyes. 'Why, they say that the auld deil has died lately, and that when the imps met to elect a successor, they fell sadly by the ears. Some of them were for taking one of their own number; but others had heard that there was one Rob Burns upon earth that was likely to make a much better deil, and it seems they are determined, if they can, to elect *him*!' The poet, by way of retort, penned the following quatrain on Humphry:

ON A NOISY POLEMIC.

Below thir stanes lie Jamie's banes :	these
O Death, it's my opinion	
Thou ne'er took such a bleth'rin bitch	garrulous
Into thy dark dominion !	

Humphry, nevertheless, lived to be poor enough to boast of having been the object of Burns's satire for the sake of the scraps of charity which it obtained for him.*

* Poor Humphry, according to the many stories circulated about him, latterly found shelter in one of a set of free cottages built at Blackhill, in Tarbolton parish, by Mr Cooper of Smithston, enjoying at the same time a pension of 3s. a week from a fund left by the same benevolent gentleman. He died in 1844, at the age of eighty-six. To the last he took a keen interest in theological and ecclesiastical disputes. The parish minister called on him when he was near his end, and, after prayer, took leave of him without any expectation of again seeing him in life. Humphry seemed to have something on his mind—he beckoned the minister back, and said: 'Man, what d' ye think o' the *Frees*?' Such, in the crisis of the Disruption, was the man who had battled with Burns over the *New Light* sixty years before. We are also told that 'in his early days he was a member of a dissenting congregation at Mauchline, and of course had seats in the meeting-house. He had often offended by his over-free life, and been warned: at length, energetic measures were taken, and he was forbidden to approach the communion-table. Hereupon Humphry sent the bellman through the town to proclaim "Seats in the meeting-house to be had cheap—cheap—cheap as dirt—apply to James Humphry!"'

ON JAMES SMITH.

Lament him, Mauchline husbands a',
 He aften did assist ye ;
 For had ye staid hale weeks awa, whole
 Your wives they ne'er had missed ye !

Ye Mauchline bairns, as on ye press children
 To school in bands thegither,
 O tread ye lightly on his grass—
 Perhaps he was your father !

ON THOMAS KIRKPATRICK, LATE BLACKSMITH
IN STOOP.

Here lies, 'mang ither useless matters, other
 Auld Thomas wi' his endless clatters. talk

ON A HENPECKED COUNTRY SQUIRE.*

As Father Adam first was fooled—
 A case that's still too common—
 Here lies a man a woman ruled ;
 The devil ruled the woman.

ON TAM THE CHAPMAN.

As Tam the chapman on a day pedlar
 Wi' Death forgather'd by the way, had a meeting
 Weel pleas'd he greets a wight sae famous,
 And Death was nae less pleas'd wi' Thomas,
 Wha cheerfully lays down his pack, pedlar's bundle
 And there blows up a hearty crack : talk
 His social, friendly, honest heart
 Sae tickled Death, they couldna part ;
 Sae, after viewing knives and garters,
 Death taks him hame to gie him quarters. give

* Campbell of Netherplace, between Mossiel and Mauchline.

Tam the Chapman was a Thomas Kennedy, whom Burns had known in boyhood and whom he afterwards encountered as a pedlar, when he found him a pleasant companion and estimable man. Kennedy, in old age, was known to William Cobbett, who printed these lines, either from a manuscript or from recollection. He died in Homer, Courtland county, New York, in November 1846.

ON WILLIAM MUIR, TARBOLTON MILL.*

An honest man here lies at rest
 As e'er God with His image blest :
 The friend of man, the friend of truth,
 The friend of age and guide of youth ;
 Few hearts like his—with virtue warm'd,
 Few heads with knowledge so inform'd :
 If there's another world, he lives in bliss ;
 If there is none, he made the best of this.

ON ROBERT FERGUSSON.†

No sculptur'd Marble here, nor pompous lay,
 No storied Urn nor animated Bust ;
 This simple stone directs pale Scotia's way
 To pour her sorrows o'er the Poet's dust.

She mourns, sweet tuneful youth, thy hapless fate :
 Tho' all the powers of song thy fancy fir'd,
 Yet Luxury and Wealth lay by in State,
 And, thankless, starv'd what they so much admir'd.

This humble tribute with a tear he gives,
 A brother Bard—he can no more bestow :
 But dear to fame thy Song immortal lives,
 A nobler monument than Art can show.

* See *ante*.

† Only the first stanza of this is on the stone erected by Burns to Fergusson ; all three are inserted in the Second Common-place Book.

ON WILLIAM CRUIKSHANK, A.M.,*
OF THE HIGH SCHOOL, EDINBURGH.

Honest Will to Heaven is gane,
And monie shall lament him ;
His faults they a' in Latin lay,
In English nane e'er kent them.

knew

ANOTHER VERSION.†

Now honest William's gaen to Heaven,
I wat na gin't can mend him :
The fauts he had in Latin lay,
For nane in English kend them.

I do not know if

ON WILLIAM NICOL.

Ye maggots, feed on Nicol's brain,
For few sic feasts ye've gotten ;
And fix your claws in Nicol's heart,
For deil a bit o't's rotten.

such

ON EBENEZER MICHIE,
SCHOOLMASTER, CLEISH, FIFESHIRE.

Burns, walking one evening with Nicol, was introduced by him to Ebenezer Michie, schoolmaster of Cleish, who accompanied them to the poet's lodging, and a merry evening was spent. In the course of the evening Michie fell asleep, and Burns proposed to write an epitaph for him. Michie was schoolmaster first in Kettle, and afterwards in Cleish. He died in 1812 at the age of forty-six.

Here lie Eben Michie's banes :
O Satan, an ye tak him,
Gie him the schulin' o' your weans,
For clever deils he'll mak 'em !

if
children

* Died 8th March 1795.

† From MS. in the Watson Collection.

ON GABRIEL RICHARDSON, BREWER, DUMFRIES.

Here brewer Gabriel's fire's extinct,
 And empty all his barrels :
 He's blest—if, as he brew'd, he drink—
 In upright, virtuous morals.*

ON JOHN BUSHBY, WRITER, DUMFRIES.

Here lies John Bushby, honest man !
 Cheat him, devil—if you can.†

ON THE AUTHOR.‡

He who of Rankine sang lies stiff and dead,
 And a green, grassy hillock hides his head :
 Alas ! alas ! a devilish change indeed !

GRIM GRIZEL.

Here lies with Death auld Grizel Grim,
 Lincluden's ugly witch.
 O Death, how horrid is thy taste
 To lie with such a bitch !

Another version is inscribed by Burns in a MS. volume (from the Glenriddel Library) now in possession of Lord Rosebery :

Here lyes withe Dethe auld Grizzel Grimme,
 Lincluden's ugly witche.
 O Dethe, an' what a taste hast thou
 Cann lye withe sicke a bitche !

It is preceded by this note : 'Passing lately through Dunblane, while I stopped to refresh my horse, the following ludicrous epitaph, which I pickt up from an old tombstone among the

* These lines were inscribed on a crystal goblet.

† The lines were inscribed on a window in the Globe Tavern.

‡ Said by Stewart (1801) to have been written by Burns on his death-bed, and forwarded to Rankine immediately after the poet's death.

ruins of the ancient Abbey, struck me particularly, being myself a native of Dumfriesshire.'

ON AN INNKEEPER, NICKNAMED 'THE MARQUIS.'

Here lies a mock Marquis, whose titles were sham'd,
If ever he rise, it will be to be damn'd.

ON A SWEARING COXCOMB.

Here cursing, swearing Burton lies,
A buck, a beau, or 'Dem my eyes !'
Who in his life did little good,
And his last words were 'Dem my blood !'

ON A SUICIDE.

Here lies in earth a root of Hell
Set by the Deil's ain dibble :
This worthless body damn'd himsel
To save the Lord the trouble.

own—tool used for
planting roots

ON WILLIAM GRAHAM OF MOSSKNOWE.

'Stop thief !' dame Nature call'd to Death,
As Willie drew his latest breath :
'How shall I make a fool again ?—
My choicest model thou hast ta'en.'

ON CAPTAIN FRANCIS LASCELLES.

When Lascelles thought fit from this world to depart,
Some friends warmly thought of embalming his heart :
A bystander whispers—'Pray don't make so much o't—
The subject is poison, no reptile will touch it.'

EPIGRAMS.

UNDER THE PORTRAIT OF MISS BURNS.*

Cease, ye prudes, your envious railings.
 Lovely Burns has charms : confess !
 True it is she had one failing :
 Had a woman ever less ?

IN LAMINGTON KIRK.

As cauld a wind as ever blew, cold
 A cauld kirk, and in 't but few,
 As cauld a minister's † ever spak—
 Ye 'se a' be het or I come back ! You 'll all be hot before

AT WHIGHAM'S INN, SANQUHAR.‡

Envy, if thy jaundiced eye
 Through this window chance to spy,
 To thy sorrow thou shalt find
 All that's generous, all that's kind :
 Friendship, virtue, every grace,
 Dwelling in this happy place.

ON A HENPECKED COUNTRY SQUIRE.§

O Death, hadst thou but spared his life
 Whom we this day lament !
 We freely wad exchanged the wife, would
 And a' been weel content.

 E'en as he is, cauld in his graff, grave
 The swap we yet will do 't ; exchange
 Tak thou the carline's carcass aff, old woman
 Thou 'se get the saul to boot. Thou shalt

* See Vol. III., p. 164.

† Rev. Thomas Mitchell, described as 'an accomplished scholar.'

‡ Inscribed by Burns on a window-pane.

§ Campbell of Netherplace.

A N O T H E R.*

One Queen Artemisia, as old stories tell,
 When deprived of her husband she lovèd so well,
 In respect for the love and affection he shewed her,
 She reduced him to dust, and she drank off the powder.

But Queen Netherplace, of a different complexion,
 When called on to order the funeral direction,
 Would have ate her dead lord, on a slender pretence,
 Not to shew her respect, but—to save the expense !

EPIGRAM ON ROUGH ROADS.

I'm now arrived—thanks to the gods !—
 Thro' pathways rough and muddy :
 A certain sign that makin roads
 Is no this people's study :
 Altho' I'm no wi' Scripture cramm'd,
 I'm sure the Bible says
 That heedless sinners shall be damn'd
 Unless they mend their *ways*.

T H E B O O K - W O R M S.

'Burns,' says Allan Cunningham, 'on a visit to a nobleman, was shewn into the library, where stood a Shakespeare, splendidly bound but unread and much worm-eaten. Long after the poet's death, some one happened to open, accidentally perhaps, the same neglected book, and found this epigram in the handwriting of Burns :'

Through and through th' inspirèd leaves
 Ye maggots, make your windings ;
 But O, respect his lordship's taste,
 And spare the golden bindings !

* Campbell of Netherplace.

When Burns was in Edinburgh he was introduced by a friend to a well-known painter, whom he found in his studio engaged on a picture of Jacob's dream ; after minutely examining the work, he wrote the following verse on the back of a little sketch :

Dear ——, I 'll gie ye some advice,
 You 'll tak it no uncivil :
 You shouldna paint at angels, man,
 But try and paint the Devil.
 To paint an angel 's kittle wark, difficult
 Wi' Nick there 's little danger ;
 You 'll easy draw a lang-kent face, long-known
 But no sae weel a stranger. R. B.

ON BEING APPOINTED TO AN EXCISE DIVISION.

Searching auld wives' barrels,
 Ochoh, the day
 That clarty barm should stain my laurels ! muddy yeast
 But what 'll ye say ?
 These movin' things ca'd wives an' weans called—children
 Wad move the very hearts o' stanes. Would

EXCISEMEN UNIVERSAL.

WRITTEN ON A WINDOW.*

Ye men of wit and wealth, why all this sneering
 'Gainst poor Excisemen ? Give the cause a hearing :
 What are your Landlords' rent-rolls ? Taxing ledgers !
 What Premiers ? What even Monarchs ? Mighty Gaugers !
 Nay, what are Priests (those seeming godly wise-men) ?
 What are they, pray, but Spiritual Excisemen !

VERSICLES ON SIGN-POSTS.

'The everlasting surliness of a lion, Saracen's head, &c., or the unchanging blandness of the Landlord welcoming a Traveller,

* In the King's Arms Inn, Dumfries, in consequence of overhearing a gentleman speak despitefully of the officers of Excise.

on some Sign-posts, would be no bad similes of the constant affected fierceness of a Bully or the eternal simper of a Frenchman or a Fiddler.'—*Burns in his Second Common-place Book.*

Her face with smile eternal drest
Just like the landlord to his guest,
High as they hang with creaking din
To index out the Country Inn.

He looked
Just as your sign-post Lions do,
With aspect fierce, and quite as harmless, too.

A head, pure, sinless quite of brain and soul,
The very image of a barber's poll :
Just shows a human face and wears a wig
And looks, when well-friseur'd, amazing big.

ON A GROTTO IN FRIARS' CARSE GROUNDS.

To Riddel, much-lamented man,
This ivied cot was dear :
Wand'rer, dost value matchless worth ?
This ivied cot revere.

ON MARIA RIDDEL.*

'Praise Woman still ' his lordship roars,
'Deserv'd or not, no matter !'
But thee, whom all my soul adores,
There Flattery cannot flatter !
Maria, all my thought and dream,
Inspires my vocal shell :
The more I praise my lovely theme,
The more the truth I tell.

* In a MS. in the possession of Mrs Locker-Lampson the heading is 'On my Lord Buchan's reiterating in an argument that "Women must always be flattered grossly or not spoken to at all."'

THE HENPECKED HUSBAND.

Curs'd be the man, the poorest wretch in life,
 The crouching vassal to the tyrant wife !
 Who has no will but by her high permission ;
 Who has not sixpence but in her possession ;
 Who must to her his dear friend's secrets tell ;
 Who dreads a curtain-lecture worse than hell !
 Were such the wife had fallen to my part,
 I'd break her spirit or I'd break her heart :
 I'd charm her with the magic of a switch,
 I'd kiss her maids and kick the perverse bitch.

ON A GALLOWAY LAIRD—NOT QUITE
SO WISE AS SOLOMON.

Bless Jesus Christ, O Cardoness,*
 With grateful lifted eyes,
 Who taught that not the soul alone,
 The body too shall rise :
 For had He said 'The soul alone
 From death I shall deliver,'
 Alas ! alas ! O Cardoness,
 Then thou hadst lain for ever !

ON A BEAUTIFUL COUNTRY-SEAT.

We grant they're thine, those beauties all,
 So lovely in our eye :
 Keep them, thou eunuch, Cardoness,
 For others to enjoy !

ON COMMISSARY THOMAS GOLDIE'S BRAINS.

Lord, to account who dares Thee call
 Or e'er dispute Thy pleasure ?
 Else, why within so thick a wall
 Enclose so poor a treasure ?

* David Maxwell of Cardoness. See *ante*, p. 199. He is described in a letter to Mrs Dunlop as a 'stupid, money-loving dunderpate.'

TO THE HON. WM. R. MAULE OF PANMURE.*

Thou fool, in thy phaeton towering,
 Art proud when that phaeton is prais'd ?
 'Tis the pride of a Thief's exhibition
 When higher his pillory's rais'd !

ON THE EARL OF GALLOWAY.

Burns had an antipathy of old standing to the Earl of Galloway. It was against him that he launched invectives when Mr Syme pointed to Garlies House, across the Bay of Wigton, in the course of their excursion in July 1793.

What dost thou in that mansion fair ?
 Flit, Galloway, and find
 Some narrow, dirty, dungeon cave,
 The picture of thy mind !

No Stewart art thou, Galloway :
 The Stewarts all were brave ;
 Besides, the Stewarts were but fools,
 Not one of them a knave.

Bright ran thy line, O Galloway,
 Thro' many a far-famed sire !
 So ran the far-famed Roman way,
 And ended in a mire.

On being informed [misinformed ?] that the earl threatened him with his resentment—

Spare me thy vengeance, Galloway !
 In quiet let me live :
 I ask no kindness at thy hand,
 For thou hast none to give.

* Afterwards Lord Panmure, friend of Fox, and a notorious free-liver. He settled on Mrs Burns a pension of £50. He was an officer in a regiment stationed in Dumfries when he provoked this outburst (1794) on the part of the poet.

It may be curious to contrast with these verses the character given to the earl by a newspaper at his death in 1806. 'His loss will be extensively and deeply felt; his numerous friends and connections profited by his advice and assistance; his active frame and mind he never spared; he did nothing by halves. As a husband and father he was exemplary; as a friend, indefatigable; he adored the Supreme Being; he loved his king; his affairs prospered. He was admired for his taste in music; and had great skill in agricultural pursuits.' For once, a friendly obituary notice may be accepted in evidence; it was at least nearer the truth than Burns's election lampoons and epigrams.

THE KEEKIN' GLASS.

'One of the Lords of Justiciary, when holding circuit at Dumfries,' so runs a local story, 'dined one day with Mr Miller at Dalswinton. According to the custom of the times, the after-dinner libations were somewhat copious; and, on entering the drawing-room, his lordship's vision was so much affected that he asked Mr Miller, pointing to one of his daughters, who were reckoned remarkably handsome women, "Wha's yon howlet-faced thing in the corner?"'

Next day, Burns, who then resided at Ellisland, happened to be a guest at Dalswinton, and, in the course of conversation, his lordship's very ungallant and unjust remark was mentioned to him. He immediately took from his pocket an old letter, on the back of which he wrote in pencil the following lines, and handed them to Miss Miller:

How daur ye ca' me 'Howlet-face,'	dare—Owl
Ye blear-e'd, wither'd spectre?	
Ye only spied the keekin' glass,	looking-glass
An' there ye saw your picture.	

THE SOLEMN LEAGUE AND COVENANT.

In the library of the Dumfries Mechanics' Institute is a copy of the thirteenth volume of Sir John Sinclair's *Statistical Account*

of *Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1794). ‘Under the head “Balmaghie” a notice is given of several martyred Covenanters belonging to that parish; and the rude yet expressive lines engraved on their tombstones are quoted at length. The pathos of the simple prose statement and the rugged force of the versification seem to have aroused the fervid soul of Burns, for there appears [on page 652], in his bold handwriting, the following verse pencilled on the margin by way of footnote.’—*William M'Dowall*.

The Solemn League and Covenant
 Now brings a smile, now brings a tear;
 But sacred Freedom, too, was theirs:
 If thou'rt a slave, indulge thy sneer.

These seem to be the original of the inferior but much more frequently quoted lines, said by Allan Cunningham to have been ‘spoken in reply to a gentleman who sneered at the sufferings of Scotland for conscience’ sake, and called the Solemn League and Covenant of the Lords and People ridiculous and fanatical:’

SECOND VERSION.

The Solemn League and Covenant
 Cost Scotland blood—cost Scotland tears;
 But it sealèd Freedom's sacred cause—
 If thou'rt a slave, indulge thy sneers.

VERSES TO JOHN M'MURDO, ESQ.,

WITH A PRESENT OF BOOKS.

Oh, could I give thee India's wealth,
 As I this trifle send,
 Because thy joy in both would be
 To share them with a friend!

But golden sands did never grace
 The Heliconian stream;
 Then take what gold could never buy—
 An honest Bard's esteem.

ON MR M'MURDO.

INSCRIBED ON A PANE OF GLASS IN HIS HOUSE.

Blest be M'Murdo to his latest day !
 No envious cloud o'ercast his evening ray ;
 No wrinkle furrowed by the hand of care,
 Nor ever sorrow add one silver hair !
 Oh, may no son the father's honour stain,
 Nor ever daughter give the mother pain !

ON JAMES GRACIE.*

Gracie, thou art a man of worth,
 O be thou Dean for ever !
 May he be damn'd to Hell henceforth
 Who faults thy weight or measure !

faults

WRITTEN ON A WINDOW† OF THE GLOBE TAVERN,
DUMFRIES.

The greybeard, old Wisdom, may boast of his treasures ;
 Give me with gay Folly to live !
 I grant him his calm-blooded, time-settled pleasures,
 But Folly has raptures to give.

A N O T H E R.

My bottle is a holy pool
 That heals the wounds o' care an' dool,
 And pleasure is a wanton trout,
 An ye drink it, ye 'll find him out.

sorrow

If

ON THE REV. DR WILLIAM BABINGTON'S LOOKS.

That there is falsehood in his looks
 I must and will deny :
 They say their master is a knave,
 And sure they do not lie.

* See *ante*. Gracie was Dean of Guild of the burgh of Dumfries.

† The panes are in possession of Mr J. P. Brunton, Galashiels.

ANDREW TURNER.

‘Being rudely called out one evening from a party of friends at the King’s Arms, Dumfries, to see a vain coxcomb of an English commercial traveller, who, having a bottle of wine on his table, thought he might patronise the *Ayrshire Ploughman*, Burns entered into conversation with the man, and soon saw what sort of person he had to deal with. Before leaving, Burns was urged to give an exhibition of his powers of impromptu versifying, and, having asked the stranger’s name and age, he instantly penned and handed to him the stanza which follows—and then abruptly quitted the room.’

In Se’enteen Hunder ’n Forty-Nine
 The Deil gat stuff to mak a swine,
 An’ coost it in a corner ; cast
 But wilily he chang’d his plan,
 An’ shap’d it something like a man,
 An’ ca’d it Andrew Turner. called

ON MARRIAGE.

That hackney’d judge of human life,
 The Preacher and the King,
 Observes :—‘The man that gets a wife
 He gets a noble thing.’
 But how capricious are mankind,
 Now loathing, now desirous !
 We married men, how oft we find
 The best of things will tire us !

TO THE BEAUTIFUL MISS ELIZA J—N,

ON HER PRINCIPLES OF LIBERTY AND EQUALITY.

How, ‘Liberty !’ Girl, can it be by thee nam’d ?
 ‘Equality,’ too ! Hussy, art not asham’d ?
 Free and Equal indeed, while mankind thou enchainest,
 And over their hearts a proud Despot so reigest !

THANKSGIVING FOR A NATIONAL VICTORY.*

Ye hypocrites, are these your pranks?
 To murder men and give God thanks?
 Desist, for shame! Proceed no further:
 God won't accept your thanks for murder.

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE.†

This anonymous quatrain appeared in the *Dumfries Weekly Journal* of 7th July 1795. Circumstantial and internal evidence are proof that it is from the pen of Burns. It refers, of course, to Pitt's tax (1795) of a guinea on each person who used hair-powder.

Long have the learnèd sought, without success,
 To find what you alone, O Pitt, possess!
 Thou only hast the magic power to draw
 A *guinea* from a *head* not worth a *straw*.

GRACES, &c.

GRACES BEFORE MEAT.

Some hae meat and canna eat,
 And some wad eat that want it: would
 But we hae meat and we can eat,
 Sae let the Lord be thankit.

O Thou, who kindly dost provide
 For ev'ry creature's want!
 We bless Thee, God of Nature wide,
 For all Thy goodness lent.

* Adapted from lines 'on the Thanksgiving Day for Perth and Preston, 17th June 1716' (Maidment's *Scottish Pasquils*, 1868). The victory Burns celebrated was doubtless Howe's, off Ushant, 1st June 1794.

† Here first included in the *Works* of Burns. See above.

And if it please Thee, heavenly Guide,
 May never worse be sent ;
 But, whether granted or denied,
 Lord, bless us with content !

O Thou, in whom we live and move,
 Who mad'st the sea and shore,
 Thy goodness constantly we prove
 And, grateful, would adore.
 And, if it please Thee, Power above,
 Still grant us, with such store,
 The friend we trust, the fair we love,
 And we desire no more.

GRACE AFTER MEAT.

Lord, [Thee] we thank, and Thee alone,
 For temporal gifts we little merit !
 At present we will ask no more—
 Let William Hyslop * bring the spirit.

EXTEMPORANEOUS GRACE ON A HAGGIS.

Ye Powers wha gie us a' that's guid,	good
Still bless auld Caledonia's brood	
Wi' great John Barleycorn's heart's bluid	
In stoups or luggies ;	jugs—cups
And on our board the king o' food,	
A glorious haggis !	

It has been stated that, being present at a party where a haggis was on the table, and being asked to say something appropriate on the occasion, Burns produced this stanza by way of grace.

* Landlord of the Globe Inn, Dumfries.

Being well received, he was induced to expand it into his address 'To a Haggis,' retaining the verse in an altered form as a peroration.

EXTEMPORE REPLY TO AN INVITATION.

SIR,

Yours this moment I unseal,	
And faith I'm gay and hearty !	
To tell the truth and shame the deil,	
I am as fou as Bartie :	drunk—the Devil
But Foorsday, sir, my promise leal,	Thursday—true
Expect me o' your partie,	
If on a beastie I can speel	climb
Or hurl in a cartie.	drive

Yours, ROBERT BURNS.

MACHLIN, *Monday night, 10 o'clock.*

LINES TO JOHN RANKINE.

Ae day, as Death, that gruesome carl,	fellow
Was driving to the tither warl'	other world
A mixtie-maxtie, motley squad	miscellaneous
And monie a guilt-bespotted lad :	
Black gowns of each denomination	
And thieves of every rank and station—	
From him that wears the star and garter	
To him that wintles in a halter :	dangles
Ashamed himself to see the wretches,	
He mutters, glow'ring at the bitches :	
'By God, I'll not be seen behint them,	
Nor 'mang the sp'ritual core present them	corps
Without, at least, ae honest man	one
To grace this damn'd infernal clan !	
By Adamhill a glance he threw :	
'Lord God !' quoth he, 'I have it now :	
There's just the man I want, i' faith !'	
And quickly stoppit Rankine's breath.	

FRAGMENTS.

H A R ' S T E.

TUNE—*I had a horse, and I had nae mair.*

Now breezy win's and slaughtering guns
 Bring Autumn's pleasant weather,
 And the muircock springs on whirring wings
 Among the blooming heather.
 Now waving crops, with yellow tops,
 Delight the weary farmer,
 An' the moon shines bright when I rove at night
 To muse * * * *

S O N G.

TUNE—*Black Jock.*

My girl she's airy, she's buxom and gay ;
 Her breath is as sweet as the blossoms in May ;
 A touch of her lips it ravishes quite.
 She's always good-natur'd, good-humor'd and free ;
 She dances, she glances, she smiles upon me :
 I never am happy when out of her sight.

* * * * *

H E R F L O W I N G L O C K S.

Her flowing locks—the raven's wing—
 Adown her neck and bosom hing ;
 How sweet unto that breast to cling,
 And round that neck entwine her !

Her lips are roses wet wi' dew !
 O what a feast her bonie mou' !
 Her cheeks a mair celestial hue,
 A crimson still diviner !

HERE'S HIS HEALTH IN WATER.

Altho' my back be at the wa',	
And though he be the fautor ;	culprit
Although my back be at the wa',	
Yet here 's his health in water !	
O wae gae by his wanton sides—	woe be to
Sae brawly 's he could flatter ;	finely
Till for his sake I 'm slighted sair	sorely
And dree the kintra clatter ;	endure the gossip of
But though my back be at the wa',	the district
Yet here 's his health in water !	

GRIM GRIZZEL.—A BALLAD.*

Grim Grizzel was a mighty Dame	
Weel ken'd on Cluden-side ;	known
Grim Grizzel was a mighty Dame	
O' meikle fame and pride.	great

When gentles met in gentle bowers
 And nobles in the ha' ;
 Grim Grizzel was a mighty Dame,
 The loudest o' them a'.

Where lawless Riot rag'd the night	
And Beauty durst na gang ;	dared not go
Grim Grizzel was a mighty Dame	
Whom nae man e'er wad wrang.	would

Nor had Grim Grizzel skill alane	
What Bower and Ha' require ;	
But she had skill, and meikle skill	
In barn and eke in byre.	cow-house

* This ballad, extending to twenty verses, is from the Rosebery MS. mentioned at p. 305 as containing the Epitaph on Grim Grizel. Mrs Grizzel Craik was the widow of Thomas Young of Lincluden.

Ae day Grim Grizzel walkèd forth,
 As she was wont to do,
 Along the banks o' Cluden fair
 Her cattle for to view.

* * * * *

PASSION'S CRY.*

Mild zephyrs waft thee to life's farthest shore,
 Nor think of me and my distresses more.
 Falsehood accurst! No! still I beg a place,
 Still near thy heart some little, little trace.
 For that dear trace the world I would resign:
 O let me live, and die, and think it mine!

By all I loved, neglected and forgot,
 No friendly face e'er lights my lonely cot:
 Shunned, hated, wronged, unpitied, unredrest,
 The mocked quotation of the scorner's jest;
 Even the poor support of my wretched life,
 Snatched by the violence of legal strife;
 Oft grateful for my very daily bread
 To those my Family's once large bounty fed;
 A welcome inmate at their homely fare,
 My griefs, my woes, my sighs, my tears they share:
 (Their vulgar souls unlike the soul refined,
 The fashioned marble of the polished mind!)

'I burn, I burn, as when thro' ripen'd corn
 By driving winds the crackling flames are borne.'
 Now, maddening wild, I curse that fatal night;
 Now bless the hour that charmed my guilty sight.
 In vain the Laws their feeble force oppose:
 Chained at his feet they groan Love's vanquished foes;

* Supposed to be spoken by Mrs Maxwell Campbell of Skerrington. (See Vol. II., p. 87, and Vol. III., p. 37.)

In vain Religion meets my shrinking eye :
 I dare not combat, but I turn and fly.
 Conscience in vain upbraids th' unhallowed fire.
 Love grasps her scorpions—stifled they expire.
 Reason drops headlong from his sacred throne.
 Your dear idea reigns, and reigns alone ;
 Each thought intoxicated homage yields,
 And riots wanton in forbidden fields.

By all on high, adoring mortals know !
 By all the conscious villain fears below !
 By what, alas, much more my soul alarms—
 My doubtful hopes once more to fill thy arms—
 Even shouldst thou, false, forswear the guilty tie,
 Thine and thine only I must live and die !

LEEZIE LINDSAY.

Will ye go to the Hielands, Leezie Lindsay ?
 Will ye go to the Hielands wi' me ?
 Will ye go to the Hielands, Leezie Lindsay,
 My pride and my darling to be ?

SKETCH FOR AN ELEGY.

[Possibly the first sketch for the Elegy on Captain Matthew Henderson.]

Craigdarroch,* fam'd for speaking art
 And every virtue of the heart,
 Stops short, nor can a word impart
 To end his sentence,
 When mem'ry strikes him like a dart
 With auld acquaintance.

Black James †—whase wit was never laith,
 But, like a sword had tint the sheath,

loath

lost

* Alexander Fergusson of Craigdarroch, hero of 'The Whistle.'

† Unknown. Possibly James Boswell, biographer of Johnson.

Ay ready for the work o' death—
 He turns aside,
 And strains wi' suffocating breath
 His grief to hide.

Even Philosophic Smellie tries
 To choke the stream that floods his eyes :
 So Moses wi' a hazel-rod
 Came o'er the stane ;
 But, tho' it cost him speaking twice,
 It gush'd amain.

Go to your marble graffs, ye great,
 In a' the tinkler-trash of state !
 But by thy honest turf I'll wait,
 Thou man o' worth,
 And weep the ae best fallow's fate
 E'er lay in earth !
 graves
 one—fellow

A MAUCLINE WEDDING.

When Eighty-five was seven months auld
 And wearing thro' the aught,
 When rolling rains and Boreas bauld
 Gied farmer-folks a faught ;
 Ae morning quondam Mason W* . . .
 Now Merchant Master Miller,
 Gaed down to meet wi' Nansie B . . . ,
 And her Jamaica siller
 To wed, that day.
 eighth
 Gave—fight
 Went
 money

The rising sun o'er Blacksideen†
 Was just appearing fairly,
 When Nell and Bess‡ got up to dress
 Seven lang half-hours o'er early !

* William Miller, a Mauchline friend of Burns.

† A hill.—*R. B.*

‡ Miller's sisters, two of the 'Mauchline Belles.' Burns commenced this satirical account of the marriage because Bess Miller had huffed his 'Bardship in the pride of her new connection.'

Now presses clink and drawers jink,
 For linens and for laces :
 But modest Muses only *think*
 What ladies' underdress is
 On sic a day ! such

But we'll suppose the stays are lac'd
 And bonie bosoms steekit, covered
 Tho' thro' the lawn—but guess the rest !
 An angel scarce durst keek it. peep
 Then stockins fine o' silken twine
 Wi' cannie care are drawn up, cautious
 An' garten'd tight whare mortal wight,

* * * * * *

[As I never wrote it down my recollection does not entirely serve me.]

But now the gown wi' rustling sound
 Its silken pomp displays ;
 Sure there's nae sin in being vain
 O' siccan bonie claes ! such
 Sae jimp the waist, the tail sae vast—
 Trouth, they were bonie birdies !
 O Mither Eve, ye wad been grieve
 To see their ample hurdies hips
 Sae large that day !

Then Sandy,* wi' s red jacket braw, fine
 Comes whip-jee-woa ! about,
 And in he gets the bonie twa—
 Lord, send them safely out !
 And auld John Trot† wi' sober phiz,
 As braid and braw's a Bailie, broad
 His shouthers and his Sunday's jiz wig
 Wi' powther and wi' ulzie oil
 Weel smear'd that day.

* * * * * *

[Against my Muse had come thus far Miss Bess and I were once more
 in unison.] ‡

* Driver of the Post-chaise.—*R. B.*

† Miller's father.—*R. B.*

‡ Said to have been 'enclosed in a letter [unpublished] to Mrs Dunlop, 21st August 1788.'

THE CARES O' LOVE.

HE.

The cares o' Love are sweeter far
Than onie other pleasure ;
And if sae dear its sorrows are,
Enjoyment, what a treasure !

any

SHE.

I fear to try, I dare na try
A passion sae ensnaring ;
For light 's her heart and blythe 's her song
That for nae man is caring.

OLD SONGS IMPROVED BY BURNS.

O WHARE DID YOU GET THAT HAUVER MEAL BANNOCK ?

TUNE—*Bonie Dundee*.

[The air of *Bonie Dundee* appears in the Skene MS., of date *circa* 1620. The tune seems to have existed at even an earlier period, as there is a song to it amongst those which were written by the English to disparage the Scottish followers by whom James VI. was attended on his arrival in the south. The first of the following verses is from an old homely ditty, the second only being the composition of Burns.]

O whare did you get that hauver meal bannock ? oatmeal
O silly blind body, O dinna ye see ?
I gat it frae a brisk young sodger laddie,
Between St Johnston and bonie Dundee.
O gin I saw the laddie that gae me 't ! if—gave
Aft has he doudl'd me upon his knee ; dandled
May Heaven protect my bonie Scots laddie
And send him safe hame to his babie and me !

My blessin's upon thy sweet wee lippie,
My blessin's upon thy bonny e'e-bree ! eyebrow
Thy smiles are sae like my blythe sodger laddie, gay
Thou 's aye the dearer and dearer to me !
But I'll big a bower on yon bonie banks, build
Where Tay rins wimplin' by sae clear ; meandering
And I'll cleed thee in the tartan sae fine clothe
And mak thee a man like thy daddie dear.

TO THE WEAVER'S GIN YE GO.

[All of this song but the chorus is by Burns. He may have written the first rough draft of it when he heard the report in 1786, that Jean Armour was about to desert him for Robert Wilson, the Paisley weaver.]

My heart was ance as blythe and free
 As simmer days were lang ;
 But a bonie, westlin weaver lad west-country
 Has gart me change my sang. made

Chorus—To the weaver's gin ye go, fair maids, if
 To the weaver's gin ye go ;
 I rede you right, gang ne'er at night advise—go
 To the weaver's gin ye go.

My mither sent me to the town,
 To warp a plaiden wab ;
 But the weary, weary warpin o't
 Has gart me sigh and sab.

A bonie, westlin weaver lad
 Sat working at his loom ;
 He took my heart as wi' a net,
 In every knot and thrum.

I sat beside my warpin-wheel,
 And ay I ca'd it roun' ;
 But every shot and every knock,
 My heart it gae a stoun.

The moon was sinking in the west,
 Wi' visage pale and wan,
 As my bonie, westlin weaver lad
 Convoy'd me thro' the glen.

But what was said, or what was done,
 Shame fa' me gin I tell ; fall on
 But Oh ! I fear the kintra soon country
 Will ken as weel 's mysel !

I AM MY MAMMY'S AE BAIRN.

TUNE—*I'm owre young to Marry yet.*

I am my mammy's ae bairn,	one child
Wi' unco folk I weary, sir ;	strange
And if I gang to your house,	
I'm fleyed 'twill make me eerie, sir.	afraid

Chorus—I'm owre young to marry yet ;
 I'm owre young to marry yet ;
 I'm owre young—'twad be a sin
 To tak me frae my mammy yet.

Hallowmass is come and gane, All Saints' Day
 The nights are lang in winter, sir ;
 And you and I in ae bed,
 In troth, I dare na venture, sir.

Fu' loud and shrill the frosty wind
Blaws through the leafless timmer, sir ; wood
But if ye come this gate again, way
I'll aulder be gin summer, sir. before

THE LAD THEY CA' JUMPIN JOHN.

Her daddie forbad, her minnie forbad,
Forbidden she wadna be :
She wadna trow 't, the browst she brew'd,
Wad taste sae bitterlie.

Chorus—The lang lad they ca' Jumpin John
 Beguil'd the bonie lassie,
 The lang lad they ca' Jumpin John
 Beguil'd the bonie lassie.

A cow and a cauf, a yowe and a hauf, sheep
And thretty gude shillins and three ;
A vera gude tocher, a cotter-man's dochter, dowry
The lass wi' the bonie black e'e.

UP IN THE MORNING EARLY.

TUNE—*Cold blows the Wind.*

[Written on the basis of an old song, the chorus of which is here preserved.]

Cauld blaws the wind frae east to west,
 The drift is driving sairly ;
 Sae loud and shill's I hear the blast—
 I'm sure it's winter fairly.

Chorus—Up in the morning's no for me,
 Up in the morning early ;
 When a' the hills are covered wi' snaw,
 I'm sure it's winter fairly.

The birds sit chittering in the thorn, shivering
 A' day they fare but sparely ;
 And lang's the night frae e'en to morn—
 I'm sure it's winter fairly.

DUSTY MILLER.

Hey, the dusty Miller,
 And his dusty coat,
 He will win a shilling,
 Or he spend a groat. Ere

Dusty was the coat,
 Dusty was the colour,
 Dusty was the kiss
 That I gat frae the Miller.

Hey, the dusty Miller,
 And his dusty sack ;
 Leeze me on the calling Commend me to
 Fills the dusty peck :

Fills the dusty peck,
 Brings the dusty siller ; money
 I wad gie my coatie
 For the dusty Miller.

THERE WAS A LASS.

TUNE—*Duncan Davison.*

[Burns wrote 'Mary Morison' to the same tune. It is probable that this song is almost entirely his.]

There was a lass, they ca'd her Meg,
 And she held o'er the moors to spin ;
 There was a lad that followed her,
 They ca'd him Duncan Davison.
 The moor was driegh, and Meg was skeigh, tedious—
timorous
 Her favour Duncan could na win ;
 For wi' the rock she wad him knock, distaff
 And ay she shook the temper-pin. pin of spinning-wheel
 As o'er the moor they lightly foor, went
 A burn was clear, a glen was green,
 Upon the banks they eased their shanks, rested their limbs
 And ay she set the wheel between :
 But Duncan swore a haly aith, oath
 That Meg should be a bride the morn ; next day
 Then Meg took up her spinnin-graith, implements
 And flang them a' out o'er the burn. across
 We will big a wee, wee house, build
 And we will live like king and queen ;
 Sae blithe and merry 's we will be
 When ye set by the wheel at e'en. put away
 A man may drink, and no be drunk ;
 A man may fight, and no be slain ;
 A man may kiss a bonie lass,
 And ay be welcome back again.

LADY ONLIE.

TUNE—*The Ruffian's Rant.*

[It has been assumed from the allusion to 'Bucky' that Burns was inspired by his northern tour to put some of his genius into a local song.]

A' the lads o' Thornie-bank,
 When they gae to the shore o' Bucky,
 They'll step in an' tak a pint
 Wi' Lady Onlie, honest Lucky ! an elderly woman,
landlady

Chorus—Lady Onlie, honest lucky,
 Brews gude ale at shore o' Bucky ;
 I wish her sale for her gude ale,
 The best on a' the shore o' Bucky.

Her house sae bien, her curch sae clean, comfortable—
 I wat she is a dainty chuckie ; head-kerchief
 And cheerlie blinks the ingle-gleed trow—darling
 O' Lady Onlie, honest Lucky ! chimney-flame

THE PLOUGHMAN.

[Of this piece, the last two verses only are by Burns. For the longer song, including them, reference may be made to the *Museum*.]

The ploughman he 's a bonie lad,
 His mind is ever true, jo,
 His garters knit below his knee,
 His bonnet it is blue, jo.

Chorus—Then up wi 't a', my ploughman lad,
 And hey my merry ploughman ;
 Of a' the trades that I do ken,
 Commend me to the ploughman.

I hae been east, I hae been west,
 I hae been at St Johnston ;
 The boniest sight that e'er I saw
 Was the ploughman laddie dancin'.

Perth

Snaw-white stockings on his legs,
 And siller buckles glancin' ;
 A gude blue bonnet on his head,
 And oh, but he was handsome.

TO DAUNTON ME.

The blude-red rose at Yule may blaw,
 The simmer lilies bloom in snaw,
 The frost may freeze the deepest sea ;
 But an auld man shall never daunt me.

taine

Refrain—To daunton me, to daunton me,
An auld man shall never daunton me.

To daunton me, and me sae young,
Wi' his fause heart and flatt'ring tongue,
That is the thing you shall never see,
For an auld man shall never daunton me.

For a' his meal and a' his maut,
For a' his fresh beef and his saut,
For a' his gold and white monie,
An auld man shall never daunton me.

His gear may buy him kye and yowes, wealth—cows—sheep
His gear may buy him glens and knowes ; knolls
But me he shall not buy nor fee,
For an auld man shall never daunton me.

He hirkles twa-fauld as he dow, limps double—can
Wi' his toothless gab and his auld beld pow, mouth—bald
And the rain rains down frae his red blear'd e'e ;
That auld man shall never daunton me.

TO A BLACKBIRD.

[Written in the beginning of 1788 to supplement a song by Clarinda, which he sent to Johnson to fit an old melody called 'The Banks of Spey.' The song is in Vol. II., p. 290.]

For thee is laughing nature gay ;
For thee she pours the vernal day :
For me in vain is nature drest,
While joy's a stranger to my breast !

THE WINTER IT IS PAST.

[The second of these verses is from the hand of Burns.]

The winter it is past, and the summer comes at last,
And the small birds, they sing on ev'ry tree ;
Now ev'ry thing is glad, while I am very sad,
Since my true love is parted from me.

The rose upon the brier, by the waters running clear,
 May have charms for the linnet or the bee ;
 Their little loves are blest, and their little hearts at rest,
 But my true love is parted from me.

MY HOGGIE.

What will I do gin my Hoggie * die,	if
My joy, my pride, my Hoggie ?	
My only beast, I had nae mae,	no more
And vow but I was vogie.	vain

The lee-lang night we watch'd the fauld,	live-long—fold
Me and my faithfu' doggie ;	
We heard nocht but the roaring linn,	waterfall
Among the braes sae scroggie.†	slopes

But the houlet cry'd frae the castle wa',	owl
The blitter frae the boggie ;	mire snipe
The tod reply'd upon the hill—	fox
I trembled for my Hoggie.	

When day did daw, and cocks did crawl,	dawn
The morning it was foggie ;	
An unco tyke lap o'er the dyke,	strange dog
And maist has killed my Hoggie.	almost

I LOVE MY LOVE IN SECRET.

[Based on an old rude song.]

My Sandy gied to me a ring,
 Was a' beset wi' diamonds fine ;
 But I gied him a far better thing,
 I gied my heart in pledge o' his ring.

Chorus—My Sandy O, my Sandy O,
 My bonie, bonie Sandy O :
 Tho' the love that I owe, to thee I dare na show,
 Yet I love my love in secret, my Sandy O.

* ' *Hoggie*, a young sheep after it is smeared, and before it is first shorn.'—STENHOUSE.

† Covered with stunted bushes.

My Sandy brak a piece o' gowd,
While down his cheeks the saut tears row'd ;
He took a hauf an' gied it to me,
And I'll keep it till the hour I die.

SIMMER'S A PLEASANT TIME.

TUNE—*Aye Waukin O.*

[This is an old song, upon which Burns appears to have made only a few alterations.]

Simmer's a pleasant time,
Flowers of every colour ;
The water rins o'er the heugh, hollow
And I long for my true lover.

Chorus—Aye waukin O,
Waukin still and wearie :
Sleep I can get nane
For thinking on my dearie.

When I sleep I dream,
When I wauk I'm eerie :
Sleep I can get nane
For thinking on my dearie.

Lanely night comes on,
A' the lave are sleeping ; rest
I think on my bonny lad,
And bleer my een wi' greetin'.

MY LOVE SHE'S BUT A LASSIE YET.

[Stenhouse says the title and the last four lines of this song are old, and that the remainder is by Burns.]

I rue the day I sought her, O,
I rue the day I sought her, O ;
Wha gets her needs na say he's woo'd,
But he may say he has bought her, O.

Chorus—My love, she's but a lassie yet,
 My love, she's but a lassie yet;
 We'll let her stand a year or twa,—
 She'll no' be hauf sae saucy yet.

Come draw a drap o' the best o't yet,
 Come draw a drap o' the best o't yet:
 Gae seek for pleasure whare ye will,
 But here I never miss'd it yet.

We're a' dry wi' drinkin o't,
 We're a' dry wi' drinkin o't:
 The minister kiss't the fiddler's wife,
 He could na preach for thinkin o't.

THE CAPTAIN'S LADY.

[Based on an old song popular in the time of the Duke of Marlborough. Stenhouse says these words are by Burns.]

When the drums do beat,
 And the cannons rattle;
 Thou shalt sit in state,
 And see thy love in battle.

Chorus—O mount and go,
 Mount and make you ready;
 O mount and go,
 And be the Captain's Lady.

When the vanquish'd foe
 Sues for peace and quiet;
 To the shades we'll go,
 And in love enjoy it.

CARLE, AN THE KING COME.

[Based on old song of the Cromwellian period.]

An somebody were come again,
 Then somebody maun cross the main;
 And every man shall hae his ain,
 Carle, an' the King come.

must

Old fellow

Chorus—Carle, an the King come,
 Carle, an the King come ;
 Thou shalt dance and I will sing,
 Carle, an the King come.

I trow we swappet for the warse, exchanged
 We gae the boot and better horse ; something to boot
 And that we'll tell them at the cross,*
 Carle, an the King come.

Coggie, an the King come, Cup
 Coggie, an the King come,
 I'se be fou and thou'se be toom, I'll—drunk—empty
 Coggie, an the King come.

FIRST WHEN MAGGY WAS MY CARE.

TUNE—*Whistle o'er the Lave o't.*

[In this song Burns improved upon some wittily indelicate verses preserved in Herd's collection.]

First when Maggie was my care,
 Heaven I thought was in her air ;
 Now we're married—speir nae mair— inquire
 Whistle o'er the lave o't. rest

Meg was meek, and Meg was mild,
 Bonie Meg was Nature's child ;
 Wiser men than me's beguiled—
 Whistle o'er the lave o't.

How we live, my Meg and me,
 How we love, and how we gree, agree
 I care na by how few may see— do not care
 Whistle o'er the lave o't.

Wha I wish were maggot's meat,
 Dish'd up in her winding-sheet,
 I could write—but Meg may see 't—
 Whistle o'er the lave o't.

* Probably the market-cross, where proclamations are made, and natural locale of a defiance.

JAMIE, COME TRY ME.

If thou should ask my love,
 Could I deny thee?
 If thou would win my love,
 Jamie, come try me.

Chorus—Jamie, come try me;
 Jamie, come try me;
 If thou would win my love,
 Jamie, come try me.

If thou should kiss me, love,
 Wha could espy thee?
 If thou wad be my love,
 Jamie, come try me.

AWA, WHIGS AWA!

TUNE—*Awa, Whigs, awa.*

[The second and last stanzas are certainly by Burns; the rest is said to be an improvement on an old Jacobite song, which has not, however, been recovered.]

Our thrissles flourish'd fresh and fair,	thistles
And bonie bloom'd our roses;	
But Whigs cam' like a frost in June,	
An' wither'd a' our posies.	

<i>Chorus</i> —Awa, Whigs, awa!	
Awa, Whigs, awa!	
Ye're but a pack o' traitor louns,	fellows
Ye'll do nae good at a'.	

Our ancient crown's fa'en in the dust—	.
Deil blin' them wi' the stoure o't;	dust
And write their names in his black beuk,	
Wha gae the Whigs the power o't.	

Our sad decay in church and state
 Surpasses my describing;

The Whigs cam' o'er us for a curse,
And we hae done wi' thriving.

Grim vengeance lang has ta'en a nap,
But we may see him waukin ;
Gude help the day when Royal heads
Are hunted like a maukin !

hare

WHARE HAE YE BEEN?

TUNE—*Killiecrankie*.

['The chorus of this song is old ; the rest of it was written by Burns.'
—STENHOUSE.]

Whare hae ye been sae braw, lad ? fine
Whare hae ye been sae brankie, O ? gay
Oh, whare hae ye been sae braw, lad ?
Cam ye by Killiecrankie,* O ?

Chorus—An' ye had been whare I hae been,
Ye wad na been sae cantie, O ; merry
An' ye had seen what I hae seen,
On the Braes o' Killiecrankie, O.

I faught at land, I faught at sea ;
At hame I faught my Auntie, O ;
But I met the devil an' Dundee,
On the Braes o' Killiecrankie, O.

The bauld Pitcur fell in a furr, furrow
An' Clavers got a clankie, O ; sharp blow
Or I had fed an Athole gled, kite
On the braes o' Killiecrankie, O.

CA' THE YOWES TO THE KNOWES.

[The verses within brackets are old, with only a few touches of
improvement by Burns. See second version, p. 139.]

As I gaed down the water-side,
There I met my shepherd lad,
He rowed me sweetly in his plaid, rolled
And he ca'd me his dearie.

* Battle of Killiecrankie, fought July 17, 1689. David Hallyburton of Pitcur (an estate in Forfarshire) was with Claverhouse throughout the campaign, and fell with him in the battle.

Chorus—Ca' the yowes to the knowes, Drive—ewes—knolls
 Ca' them where the heather grows,
 Ca' them where the burnie rows, rolls
 My bonie dearie.

Will ye gang down the water-side, go
 And see the waves sae sweetly glide?
 Beneath the hazel spreading wide,
 The moon it shines fu' clearly.

[Ye sall get gowns and ribbons meet,
 Cauf-leather shoon upon your feet,
 And in my arms thou 'lt lie and sleep,
 And ay sall be my dearie.

If ye 'll but stand to what ye 've said,
 I 'se gang wi' thee, my shepherd lad,
 And ye may row me in your plaid,
 And I sall be your dearie.]

While waters wimple to the sea, wander
 While day blinks in the lift sae hie, shines—sky—high
 Till clay-cauld death shall blin' my e'e,
 Ye sall be my dearie.

YOUNG JOCKIE.

TUNE—*Young Jockey*.

[‘The whole of [this song], excepting three or four lines, is the production of Burns.’—STENHOUSE.]

Young Jockie was the blythest lad
 In a' our town or here awa': in this neighbourhood
 Fu' blythe he whistled at the gaud,*
 Fu' lightly danc'd he in the ha'.
 He roos'd my een, sae bonie blue, praised
 He roos'd my waist, sae genty sma'; elegantly
 An' ay my heart cam to my mou',
 When ne'er a body heard or saw.

* The driver of the plough-horses carried a rod or gaud.

My Jockie toils upon the plain,
 Thro' wind and weet, thro' frost and snaw :
 And o'er the lea I leuk fu' fain, look—fondly
 When Jockie's owsen hameward ca'. oxen—drive
 An' ay the night comes round again,
 When in his arms he taks me a';
 An' ay he vows he'll be my ain,
 As lang's he has breath to draw.

COCK UP YOUR BEAVER.

[Based on an English song ridiculing Scotchmen who settled in London after the accession of James VI. to the throne of England.]

When first my brave Johnie lad came to this town
 He had a blue bonnet that wanted the crown ;
 But now he has gotten a hat and a feather,—
 Hey, brave Johnie lad, cock up your beaver !
 Cock up your beaver, and cock it fu' sprush ; spruce
 We'll over the border and gie them a brush ;
 There's somebody there we'll teach better behaviour,
 Hey, brave Johnie lad, cock up your beaver !

BONIE LADDIE, HIGHLAND LADDIE.

I hae been at Crookieden,*
 My bonie laddie, Highland laddie,
 Viewing Willie and his men,
 My bonie laddie, Highland laddie.
 There our foes that burnt or slew
 My bonie laddie, Highland laddie,
 There, at last, they gat their due,
 My bonie laddie, Highland laddie.

Satan sits in his black neuk corner
 My bonie laddie, Highland laddie,
 Breaking sticks to roast the Duke,†
 My bonie laddie, Highland laddie.

* A cant name for hell.

† Cumberland.

The bloody monster gae a yell,
 My bonie laddie, Highland laddie,
 And loud a laugh gaed round a' hell,
 My bonie laddie, Highland laddie.

EPPIE M'NAB.

O saw ye my dearie, my Eppie Macnab?
 O saw ye my dearie, my Eppie Macnab?
 She's down in the yard, she's kissin' the laird,
 She winna come hame to her ain Jock Rab.
 O come thy ways to me, my Eppie Macnab;
 O come thy ways to me, my Eppie Macnab;
 Whate'er thou has dune, be it late, be it sune,
 Thou's welcome again to thy ain Jock Rab.

What says she, my dearie, my Eppie Macnab?
 What says she, my dearie, my Eppie Macnab?
 She lets thee to wit, that she has thee forgot,
 And for ever disowns thee, her ain Jock Rab.
 O had I ne'er seen thee, my Eppie Macnab!
 O had I ne'er seen thee, my Eppie Macnab!
 As light as the air, and fause as thou's fair,
 Thou's broken the heart o' thy ain Jock Rab.

WHA IS THAT AT MY BOWER DOOR?

TUNE—*Lass, an I come near thee.*

['Mr Gilbert Burns told the editor (Cromek) that this song was suggested to his brother by the "Auld Man's Address to the Widow," printed in Ramsay's *Tea-table Miscellany*, which the poet first heard sung by Jean Wilson, a silly old widow-woman, then living at Tarbolton, remarkable for the simplicity and naïveté of her character, and for singing old Scotch songs with a peculiar energy and earnestness of manner. Having outlived her family, she still retained the form of family worship; and before she sang a hymn she would gravely give out the first line of the verse as if she had a numerous audience, to the great diversion of her listening neighbours.'—CROMEK. It has been suggested that either James Findlay, the Excise officer at Tarbolton,

who, in 1788, trained Burns for his official duties, or a relative, may have been the hero of this amended song.]

Wha is that at my bower-door?
 O wha is it but Findlay:
 Then gae your gate, ye'se nae be here;
 Indeed maun I, quo' Findlay. go your way
—you shan't
must
 What maks ye, sae like a thief?
 O come and see, quo' Findlay.
 Before the morn ye'll work mischief;
 Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

Gif I rise and let you in; If
 Let me in, quo' Findlay:
 Ye'll keep me waukin wi' your din;
 Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.
 In my bower if ye should stay;
 Let me stay, quo' Findlay:
 I fear ye'll bide till break o' day;
 Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

Here this night if ye remain;
 I'll remain, quo' Findlay:
 I dread ye'll learn the gate again; way
 Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.
 What may pass within this bower;
 Let it pass, quo' Findlay:
 Ye maun conceal till your last hour;
 Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

THE TITHER MORN.

To a Highland air.

The tither morn, when I forlorn	other
Aneath an aik sat moaning,	oak
I did na trow, I'd see my jo,	sweetheart
Beside me, 'gain the gloaming.	before
But he sae trig, lap o'er the rig,	neat—ridge
And dawtingly did cheer me,	caressingly
When I, what reck, did least expec',	
To see my lad so near me.	

THE WEARY PUND O' TOW.

TUNE—*The Weary Pund o' Tow.*

[Here Burns very greatly improved a very old song.]

I bought my wife a stane o' lint flax
 As gude as e'er did grow ;
 And a' that she has made o' that,
 Is ae puir pund o' tow.

Chorus—The weary pund, the weary pund,
 The weary pund o' tow ; yarn
 I think my wife will end her life
 Before she spin her tow.

There sat a bottle in a bole, recess in wall
 Ayont the ingle lowe, fireplace—flame
 And ay she took the tither souk, another mouthful
 To drouk the stourie tow.*

Quoth I, for shame, ye dirty dame,
 Gae spin your tap o' tow ! head
 She took the rock, and wi' a knock distaff
 She brake it o'er my pow.

At last her feet—I sang to see't—
 Gaed foremost o'er the knowe ; knoll
 And or I wad anither jad
 I'll wallop in a tow. hang in a halter

WHEN SHE CAM BEN SHE BOBBET.

O when she cam' ben she bobbet fu' low,
 O when she cam' ben she bobbet fu' low ;
 And when she cam' ben she kiss'd Cockpen,†
 And syne she deny'd she did it at a'. then

* To quench the thirst caused by the dust given off by the flax.

† The allusion, both in this song and in the extraordinary 'Scroggam, my dearie,' to Cockpen, a village a few miles to the south of Edinburgh, may have inspired Lady Nairne's ballad 'The Laird o' Cockpen.'

And was na Cockpen right saucy witha',
 And was na Cockpen right saucy witha',
 In leaving the daughter o' a lord,
 And kissin' a collier lassie, an' a'.

O never look down, my lassie, at a',
 O never look down, my lassie, at a';
 Thy lips are as sweet, and thy figure complete,
 As the finest dame in castle or ha'.

Tho' thou hast nae silk and holland sae sma',
 Tho' thou hast nae silk and holland sae sma';
 Thy coat and thy sark are thy ain handywark— shirt
 And Lady Jean was never sae braw. fine

GANE IS THE DAY.

TUNE—*Guidwife, count the Lawin.*

Gane is the day, and mirk's the night, dark
 But we'll ne'er stray for faute o' light,
 Gude ale and brandy's stars and moon,
 And blude-red wine's the rysing sun.

Chorus—Then gudewife, count the lawin, reckoning
 The lawin, the lawin;
 Then gudewife, count the lawin,
 And bring a coggie mair. cup

There's wealth and ease for gentlemen,
 And simple folk maun fecht and fen; must make a shift
 But here we're a' in ae accord,
 For ilka man that's drunk's a lord. every

My coggie is a haly pool holy
 That heals the wounds o' care and dool; sorrow
 And Pleasure is a wanton trout,
 An' ye drink it a', ye'll find him out.*

* Burns wrote this last stanza on one of the windows of the Globe Inn.

IT IS NA, JEAN, THY BONIE FACE.

TUNE—*The Maid's Complaint.*

It is na, Jean, thy bonie face
 Nor shape that I admire,
 Although thy beauty and thy grace
 Might weel awauk desire.
 Something, in ilka part o' thee,
 To praise, to love, I find ;
 But dear as is thy form to me,
 Still dearer is thy mind.

Nae mair ungenerous wish I hae,
 Nor stronger in my breast,
 Than, if I canna mak thee sae,
 At least to see thee blest.
 Content am I, if Heaven shall give
 But happiness to thee :
 And as wi' thee I'd wish to live,
 For thee I'd bear to die.

MY COLLIER LADDIE.

TUNE—*The Collier Laddie.*

[Burns, in his Notes, speaks of this song as an old one with which he had had nothing to do. As it appears, however, in no other collection, and is found in his handwriting among Johnson's manuscripts, Mr Stenhouse infers that the greater part of it is his own composition.]

Whare live ye, my bonie lass ?
 And tell me what they ca' ye ; call
 My name, she says, is mistress Jean,
 And I follow the Collier laddie.

See you not yon hills and dales
 The sun shines on sae brawlie ! brightly
 They a' are mine, and they shall be thine
 Gin ye'll leave your Collier laddie. If

Ye shall gang in gay attire,
Weel buskit up sae gaudy ; dressed
And ane to wait on every hand
Gin ye'll leave your Collier laddie.

Though ye had a' the sun shines on
And the earth conceals sae lowly ;
I wad turn my back on you and it a'
And embrace my Collier laddie.

I can win my five pennies in a day
And spend at night fu' brawlie ; finely
And make my bed in the collier's neuk corner
And lie down wi' my Collier laddie.

Loove for loove is the bargain for me,
 Though the wee cot-house should haud me ; hold
 And the world before me to win my bread,
 And fair fa' my Collier laddie. blessings on

YE JACOBITES BY NAME.

TUNE—*Ye Jacobites by Name.*

Ye Jacobites by name, give an ear, give an ear ;
 Ye Jacobites by name, give an ear ;
 Ye Jacobites by name,
 Your fautes I will proclaim, faults
 Your doctrines I maun blame— must
 You shall hear.

What is Right and what is Wrang, by the law, by the law?
 What is Right and what is Wrang by the law?
 What is Right and what is Wrang?
 A short sword, and a lang,
 A weak arm, and a strang,
 For to draw.

What makes heroic strife, famed afar, famed afar?
 What makes heroic strife famed afar?
 What makes heroic strife?
 To whet th' assassin's knife,
 Or hunt a Parent's life
 Wi' bluidy war.

Then let your schemes alone, in the state, in the state;
 Then let your schemes alone in the state;
 Then let your schemes alone,
 Adore the rising sun,
 And leave a man undone*
 To his fate.

L A D Y M A R Y A N N.

TUNE—*Craigton's Growing.*

[‘Modelled by Burns from an ancient ballad, entitled *Craigstone's Growing.*’—STENHOUSE. The ballad, the original of which, with the music, Burns is said to have taken down from a lady's recitation in the course of his Highland tour, is said to have been founded on an incident in real life. The young Urquhart of Craigstone was married, while yet a lad, to Elizabeth, the daughter of his guardian, the laird of Innes, who wished to secure his estates.]

Oh, Lady Mary Ann looks o'er the Castle wa';
 She saw three bonie boys playing at the ba';
 The youngest he was the flower amang them a'—
 My bonie laddie's young, but he's growin' yet.

O father! O father! an' ye think it fit,
 We'll send him a year to the college yet:
 We'll sew a green ribbon round about his hat,
 And that will let them ken he's to marry yet.

* Mr Andrew Lang has pointed out that the ‘man undone,’ if Henry, Cardinal Duke of York is intended, had, of course, no party, except the Laird of Gask, in 1792, when the song was published.

Lady Mary Ann was a flower in the dew,
 Sweet was its smell, and bonie was its hue ;
 And the langer it blossom'd the sweeter it grew :
 For the lily in the bud will be bonier yet.

Young Charlie Cochrane was the sprout of an aik ; oak
 Bonie and bloomin', and straught was its make :
 The sun took delight to shine for its sake,
 And it will be the brag o' the forest yet.

The simmer is gane when the leaves they were green
 And the days are awa' that we hae seen ;
 But far better days I trust will come again,
 For my bonie laddie's young, but he's growin' yet.

KENMURE'S ON AND AWA.

TUNE—*O Kenmure's on and awa', Willie.*

[This song is supposed to be one of those which Burns only improved from old versions. William Gordon, sixth Viscount of Kenmure, raised a body of troops for the Pretender in 1715, and had the chief command of the insurgent forces in the south of Scotland. Taken at Preston, he was tried and condemned to be beheaded, which sentence was executed on the 24th February 1716. His forfeited estate was bought back by his widow, and transmitted to their son. By the son of that son—afterwards Viscount of Kenmure in consequence of the restoration of the title—Burns was on one occasion entertained at his romantic seat, Kenmure Castle, near New Galloway. See *ante*, p. 17.]

O Kenmure's on and awa, Willie !
 O Kenmure's on and awa !
 And Kenmure's lord's the bravest lord
 That ever Galloway saw.

Success to Kenmure's band, Willie !
 Success to Kenmure's band ;
 There's no a heart that fears a Whig
 That rides by Kenmure's hand.

Here's Kenmure's health in wine, Willie !
 Here's Kenmure's health in wine ;
 There ne'er was a coward o' Kenmure's blude,
 Nor yet o' Gordon's line.

O Kenmure's lads are men, Willie !
 O Kenmure's lads are men ;
 Their hearts and swords are metal true—
 And that their foes shall ken.

They'll live or die wi' fame, Willie !
 They'll live or die wi' fame ;
 But sune, wi' sounding victorie,
 May Kenmure's lord come hame !

Here's him that's far awa, Willie !
 Here's him that's far awa !
 And here's the flower that I loe best—
 The rose that's like the snaw !

SUCH A PARCEL OF ROGUES IN A NATION.

TUNE—*A Parcel of Rogues in a Nation.*

[Burns here greatly improved a song directed against the Union between Scotland and England and the Scottish politicians who favoured it.]

Fareweel to a' our Scottish fame,
 Fareweel our ancient glory,
 Fareweel even to the Scottish name
 Sae famed in martial story.
 Now Sark rins o'er the Solway sands
 And Tweed rins to the ocean,
 To mark where England's province stands—
 Such a parcel of rogues in a nation !

What force or guile could not subdue
 Through many warlike ages
 Is wrought now by a coward few
 For hireling traitors' wages.

The English steel we could disdain,
 Secure in valour's station ;
 But English gold has been our bane—
 Such a parcel of rogues in a nation !

O would, ere I had seen the day
 That treason thus could fell us,
 My auld gray head had lien in clay lain
 Wi' Bruce and loyal Wallace !
 But pith and power, till my last hour,
 I 'll mak this declaration :
 We 're bought and sold for English gold—
 Such a parcel of rogues in a nation !

THE CARLS O' DYSART.

TUNE—*Hey, ca' through.*

[Written upon the basis of an old Fifeshire boat-song.]

Up wi' the carls o' Dysart, old men
 And the lads o' Buckhaven,
 And the kimmers o' Largo, gossips
 And the lasses o' Leven.

Chorus—Hey, ca' thro', ca' thro', press on
 For we hae mickle ado ; much
 Hey, ca' thro', ca' thro',
 For we hae mickle ado.*

We hae tales to tell,
 An' we hae sangs to sing ;
 We hae pennies to spend,
 And we hae pints to bring.

We 'll live a' our days,
 And them that comes behin',
 Let them do the like,
 And spend the gear they win. wealth

* 'These lines were the refrain of the singers as they kept time to the tune with their oars.'—*A History of Fife and Kinross*, by Æ. J. G. Mackay.

THE CARL OF KELLY BURN BRAES.

TUNE—*Kellyburn Braes.*

[An old set of traditionary verses entitled 'The Farmer's Old Wife,' which is given at p. 204 of Robert Bell's *Ancient Poems, Ballads, and Songs of the Peasantry of England*, modified by Burns.]

There leeveit a carl on Kelly Burn Braes,* old man
 (Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme,) old man
 And he had a wife was the plague o' his days ;
 And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

Ae day as the carl gaed up the lang glen,
 (Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme,) old man
 He met wi' the Deil ; wha said, 'How do you fen ?' contrive to live
 And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

'I've got a bad wife, sir ; that's a' my complaint ;
 (Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme,) old man
 For, saving your presence, to her ye're a saint :
 And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.'

'It's neither your stot nor your staig I shall crave, bullock—stallion
 (Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme,) old man
 But gie me your wife, man, for her I must have,
 And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.'

'O welcome, most kindly,' the blythe carl said,
 (Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme,) old man
 'But if ye can match her, ye're waur than ye're ca'd, worse
 And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.'

The devil has got the auld wife on his back ;
 (Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme,) old man
 And, like a poor pedlar, he's carried his pack ;
 And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

* The Kelly Burn is the northern boundary of Ayrshire, dividing the parish of Largs from Renfrewshire, and falls into the Firth of Clyde at Kelly Bridge.

He's carried her hame to his ain hallan-door ; porch
 (Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme,) old woman—mad
 Syne bade her gae in, for a b—— and a ——,
 And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

Then straight he makes fifty, the pick o' his band,
 (Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme,) smoked
 Turn out on her guard in the clap o' a hand ;
 And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

The carlin gaed thro' them like ony wud bear,
 (Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme,) smoked
 Whae'er she gat hands on cam' near her nae mair ;
 And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

A reekit wee devil looks over the wa' ;
 (Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme,) smoked
 'Oh, help, maister, help, or she'll ruin us a',
 And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.'

The Devil he swore by the edge o' his knife,
 (Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme,) smoked
 He pitied the man that was tied to a wife ;
 And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

The Devil he swore by the kirk and the bell,
 (Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme,) smoked
 He was not in wedlock, thank Heav'n, but in hell ;
 And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

Then Satan has travell'd again wi' his pack ;
 (Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme,) smoked
 And to her auld husband he's carried her back ;
 And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.

'I hae been a Deevil the feck o' my life ; greater part
 (Hey, and the rue grows bonie wi' thyme,) smoked
 But ne'er was in hell till I met wi' a wife ;
 And the thyme it is wither'd, and rue is in prime.'

JOCKY FOU AND JENNY FAIN.

[Burns made these lines of his own the middle portion of a song in the *Tea-table Miscellany*, called 'Jocky Fou and Jenny Fain,' which Johnson included in his *Museum*.]

Ithers seek they ken na what,
Features, carriage and a' that ;
Gie me loove in her I court,
Loove to loove maks a' the sport.

Let loove sparkle in her e'e ;
Let her lo'e nac man but me ;
That's the tocher gude I prize,
There the luvèr's treasure lies.

dowry

THE SLAVE'S LAMENT.

['The words and the music of this song were communicated by Burns for the *Museum*.'—STENHOUSE. 'I believe that Burns took the idea of his verses from the "Betrayed Maid," a ballad formerly much hawked about in Scotland.'—C. K. SHARPE. One might have hesitated to assign this song to Burns ; but certainly his authorship of it is much fortified by its resemblance to another song of his, entitled 'The Ruined Farmer's Lament,' which seems to have been formed on the same model ; see Vol. I., p. 55.]

It was in sweet Senegal that my foes did me enthrall,
For the lands of Virginia, ginia O ;
Torn from that lovely shore, and must never see it more,
And alas ! I am weary, weary, O !

All on that charming coast is no bitter snow or frost,
Like the lands of Virginia, ginia O ;
There streams for ever flow, and there flowers for ever blow,
And alas ! I am weary, weary, O !

The burden I must bear, while the cruel scourge I fear,
In the lands of Virginia, ginia O ;
And I think on friends most dear, with the bitter, bitter tear,
And alas ! I am weary, weary, O !

O CAN YE LABOR LEA, YOUNG MAN.

I fee'd a man at Martinmas, hired
 Wi' airle pennies three ; earnest
 But a' the faut I had to him,
 He could na labor lea.

Chorus—O can ye labor lea, young man ? till grass-land
 O can ye labor lea ?
 Gae back the gate ye cam again, way
 Ye 'se never scorn me.

O clappin's gude in Febarwar,
 An' kissin's sweet in May ;
 But what signifies a young man's love,
 An it does na last for ay.

O kissin' is the key o' luve,
 An' clappin is the lock ;
 An' makin o's the best thing yet,
 That e'er a young thing gat.

HAD I THE WYTE? SHE BADE ME!

Had I the wyte ? had I the wyte ? Was I to blame ?
 Had I the wyte ? she bade me !
 Had I the wyte ? had I the wyte ?
 Had I the wyte ? she bade me !
 Had I the wyte ? had I the wyte ?
 Had I the wyte ? she bade me ;
 She watch'd me by the hie-gate-side,
 And up the loan she shaw'd me. milking-place

And when I wad na venture in,
 A coward loon she ca'd me ;
 And when I wad na venture in,
 A coward loon she ca'd me ;

And when I wad na venture in,
 A coward loon she ca'd me ;
 Had Kirk and State been in the gate,
 I'd lighted when she bade me !

Sae craftilie she took me ben, in
 And bade me mak nae clatter ;
 'For our ramgunshoch, glum goodman surly
 Is o'er ayont the water :'
 Whae'er shall say I wanted grace,
 When I did kiss and dawte her, caress
 Let him be planted in my place,
 Syne say I was a fautor. Then—culprit

Could I for shame, could I for shame,
 Could I for shame refus'd her ?
 And wad na Manhood been to blame,
 Had I unkindly us'd her ?
 He claw'd her wi' the ripplin-kame, flax-dressing comb
 And blae and bluidy bruis'd her : blue
 When sic a husband was frae hame,
 What wife but wad excus'd her ?

I dighted aye her een sae blue, wiped—eyes
 And bann'd the cruel randy :
 And weel I wat her willin' mou' wot
 Was e'en like succar-candie.
 At gloamin-shote it was, I wat, twilight
 I lighted on the Monday ;
 But I cam' through the Tiseday's dew,
 To wanton Willie's brandy.

COMING THROUGH THE RYE.

TUNE—*Coming through the Rye.*

Coming through the rye, poor body,
 Coming through the rye,
 She draiglet a' her petticoatie, wet
 Coming through the rye.

Chorus—Jenny's a' wat, poor body,
 Jenny's seldom dry ;
 She draiglet a' her petticoatie,
 Coming through the rye.

Gin a body meet a body
 Coming through the rye,
 Gin a body kiss a body,
 Need a body cry ?

If

Gin a body meet a body
 Coming through the glen,
 Gin a body kiss a body,
 Need the world ken ?

YOUNG JAMIE, PRIDE OF A' THE PLAIN.

TUNE—*The Carlin o' the Glen.*

[Stenhouse regards this song, the original of which is in the British Museum, as an unclaimed production of Burns. The rather fanciful suggestion has been thrown out that 'it may have been one of those pastorals which the poet composed with a view to conciliate the temper and melt the coldness of Maria Riddel, whose lyrical tastes were very Arcadian.']

Young Jamie, pride of a' the plain,
 Sae gallant and sae gay a swain ;
 Thro' a' our lasses he did rove,
 And reigned resistless King of Love :
 But now wi' sighs and starting tears,
 He strays amang the woods and breers ;
 Or in the glens and rocky caves
 His sad complaining dowie raves :

doleful

I wha sae late did range and rove,
 And chang'd with every moon my love,
 I little thought the time was near,
 Repentance I should buy sae dear.

The slighted maids my torments see,
And laugh at a' the pangs I dree ; suffer
While she, my cruel, scornful Fair,
Forbids me e'er to see her mair !

THE LASS O' ECCLEFECHAN.

'TUNE—*Jacky Latin.*

Gat ye me, O gat ye me,
 O gat ye me wi' naething;
 Rock an reel, and spinning-wheel, distaff
 A mickle quarter bason.
 Bye attour, my Gutter has Over and above—grandsire
 A heich house and a laich ane,
 A' forbye my bonny sel', besides
 The toss o' Ecclefechan. toast

O haud your tongue now, Lucky Laing ;	
O haud your tongue and jauner ;	prattle
I held the gate till you I met,	went the (right) way
Syne I began to wander :	Then
I tint my whistle and my sang,	lost
I tint my peace and pleasure ;	
But your green graff, now, Lucky Laing,	grave
Wad airt me to my treasure.	direct

THE CARDIN' O'T.

TUNE—*Salt-fish and Dumplings.*

I coft a stane o' haslock woo', bought—soft wool from
To make a wab to Johnie o't; neck of sheep
For Johnie is my only jo; web
I lo'e him best of onie yet. sweetheart

Chorus—The cardin' o't, the spinnin' o't,
The warpin' o't, the winnin' o't ; winding
When ilka ell cost me a groat, every
The tailor staw the lynin' o't. stole—lining

For though his locks be lyart grey, mixed black and gray
 And though his brow be beld aboon ; bald above
 Yet I hae seen him on a day,
 The pride of a' the parishen.

THE LASS THAT MADE THE BED TO ME.

[Among the songs Burns contributed to Johnson's fifth volume was one entitled 'The Lass that made the Bed to Me.' It was founded on an old ballad 'The Cumberland Lass,' preserved by Tom D'Urfey, and composed, as Burns himself says, on 'an amour of Charles II. when skulking in the North about Aberdeen in the time of usurpation.']

When Januar' wind was blawin cauld,
 As to the North I took my way
 The mirksome night did me enfauld,
 I knew na whare to lodge till day :
 By my gude luck a maid I met,
 Just in the middle o' my care,
 And kindly she did me invite
 To walk into a chamber fair.

I bow'd fu' low unto this maid,
 And thank'd her for her courtesie ;
 I bow'd fu' low unto this maid,
 An' bade her make a bed to me ;
 She made the bed baith large and wide,
 Wi' twa white hands she spread it down ;
 She put the cup to her rosy lips,
 And drank—' Young man, now sleep ye soun'.'

Chorus—The bonie lass made the bed to me,
 The braw lass made the bed to me,
 I'll ne'er forget till the day I die,
 The lass that made the bed to me.

fine

She snatch'd the candle in her hand,
 And frae my chamber went wi' speed ;
 But I call'd her quickly back again,
 To lay some mair below my head :

A cod she laid below my head,
 And servèd me with due respect,
 And, to salute her wi' a kiss,
 I put my arms about her neck.

pillow

‘Haud aff your hands, young man!’ she said,
 ‘And dinna sae uncivil be;
 Gif ye hae ony luve for me,
 O wrang na my virginitie.’
 Her hair was like the links o’ gowd,
 Her teeth were like the ivorie,
 Her cheeks like lilies dipt in wine,
 The lass that made the bed to me :

if

Her bosom was the driven snaw,
 Twa drifted heaps sae fair to see;
 Her limbs the polish’d marble stane,
 The lass that made the bed to me.
 I kiss’d her o’er and o’er again,
 And aye she wist na what to say:
 I laid her ’tween me and the wa’;
 The lassie thocht na lang till day.

Upon the morrow when we raise,
 I thank’d her for her courtesie;
 But ay she blush’d and ay she sigh’d,
 And said, ‘Alas, ye’ve ruin’d me.’
 I clasp’d her waist, and kiss’d her syne,
 While the tear stood twinkling in her e’e;
 I said, my lassie, dinna cry,
 For ye ay shall make the bed to me.

then

She took her mither’s holland sheets,
 An’ made them a’ in sarks to me;
 Blythe and merry may she be,
 The lass that made the bed to me.
 The bonie lass made the bed to me,
 The braw lass made the bed to me;
 I’ll ne’er forget till the day I die
 The lass that made the bed to me.

THE HIGHLAND LADDIE.

TUNE—*If thou'lt play me fair play.*

[‘Compiled by Burns from some Jacobite verses, entitled “The Highland Lad and the Lowland Lassie.”—STENHOUSE.]

The boniest lad that e'er I saw,
 Bonie laddie, Highland laddie,
 Wore a plaid, and was fu' braw,
 Bonie Highland laddie.
 On his head a bonnet blue,
 Bonie laddie, Highland laddie ;
 His royal heart was firm and true,
 Bonie Highland laddie.

gay

Trumpets sound, and cannons roar,
 Bonie lassie, Lowland lassie ;
 And a' the hills wi' echoes roar,
 Bonie Lowland lassie.
 Glory, honour, now invite,
 Bonie lassie, Lowland lassie,
 For freedom and my king to fight,
 Bonie Lowland lassie.

The sun a backward course shall take,
 Bonie laddie, Highland laddie,
 Ere aught thy manly courage shake,
 Bonie Highland laddie.
 Go ! for yourself procure renown,
 Bonie laddie, Highland laddie ;
 And for your lawful king his crown,
 Bonie Highland laddie.

S A E F A R A W A.

TUNE—*Dalkeith Maiden Bridge.*

O sad and heavy should I part,
 But for her sake sae far awa' ;
 Unknowing what my way may thwart,
 My native land sae far awa'.

Thou that of a' things Maker art,
That formed this Fair sae far awa',
Gie body strength, and I'll ne'er start
At this my way sae far awa'.

How true is love to pure desert,
So love to her sae far awa';
And nought can heal my bosom's smart,
While, oh, she is sae far awa'.
Nane other love, nae other dart,
I feel, but hers sae far awa';
But fairer never touch'd a heart,
Than hers, the Fair sae far awa'.

I'LL AY CA' IN BY YON TOWN.

There's nane sall ken, there's nane sall guess,
What brings me back the gate again, way
But she my fairest faithfu' lass,
And stowlins we sall meet again. by stealth

Chorus—I'll ay ca' in by yon town,* call at
And by yon garden green again;
I'll ay ca' in by yon town,
And see my bonie Jean again.

She'll wander by the aiken tree, oak
When trystin' time draws near again; meeting
And when her lovely form I see,
O haith, she's doubly dear again. In truth

THE HIGHLAND BALOU.

[Stenhouse says Burns obtained the words as well as the music of this song in the course of his Highland tour, and translated the former into Lowland Scotch.]

Hee balou, my sweet wee Donald,
Picture o' the great Clanronald;
Brawlie kens our wanton Chief Well
Wha gat my young Highland thief.

* 'Town' is probably used here in the Scotch sense, and may mean a farm-steading or a clump of cottages round or near a country house.

Leeze me on thy bonie craigie, I dote on—neck
 An thou live, thou 'll steal a naigie, horse
 Travel the country thro' and thro',
 And bring hame a Carlisle cow.

Thro' the Lawlands, o'er the Border,
 Weel, my babie, may thou funder! further
 Harry the louns o' the laigh Countrie, low
 Syne to the Highlands hame to me. Then

BANNOCKS O' BARLEY.

TUNE—*The Killogie.*

[Based by Burns on a Jacobite song and almost, if not altogether, rewritten.]

Wha in a brulyie broil
 Will first cry a parley?
 Never the lads wi'
 The bannocks o' barley!

Chorus—Bannocks o' bear-meal,
 Bannocks o' barley;
 Here's to the Highlandman's
 Bannocks o' barley!

Wha in his wae-days adversity
 Were loyal to Charlie?—
 Wha but the lads wi'
 The bannocks a' barley?

IT WAS A' FOR OUR RIGHTFU' KING.

TUNE—*It was a' for our rightfu' King.*

[There is some doubt as to the authorship of this singularly beautiful song, which Burns sent to Johnson in his own handwriting. Allan Cunningham was of opinion that Burns 'rather beautified and amended some ancient strain which he had discovered than wrote it wholly from his own heart and fancy.' In this view he was supported by David Laing. The third verse is to be found in an old stall-ballad called 'Molly Stuart,' which is, however, of uncertain date. Sir Walter Scott,

under the belief that the stanza was old, reproduced it in ‘Elsbeth’s Daughter’ in the *Antiquary*. Into his song ‘A weary lot is thine, fair maid,’ in *Rokeby*, he introduces this verse :

‘He turned his charger as he spake,
Upon the river shore ;
He gave his bridle reins a shake,
Said “Adieu for ever more, my love,
And adieu for ever more.”’

It is tolerably safe to say that whatever virtue the song has has been given to it by Burns.]

It was a’ for our rightfu’ King
We left fair Scotland’s strand ;
It was a’ for our rightfu’ King
We e’er saw Irish land,
My dear ;
We e’er saw Irish land.

Now a’ is done that men can do,
And a’ is done in vain ;
My Love and Native Land farewell,
For I maun cross the main,
My dear ;
For I maun cross the main.

must

He turn’d him right, and round about
Upon the Irish shore ;
And gae his bridle reins a shake,
With adieu for evermore,
My dear ;
With adieu for evermore.

The soger frae the wars returns
The sailor frae the main ;
But I hae parted frae my love,
Never to meet again,
My dear ;
Never to meet again.

When day is gane, and night is come,
And a’ folk bound to sleep ;

I think on him that 's far awa',
 The lee-lang night, and weep,
 My dear ;
 The lee-lang night, and weep.

live-long

THE HIGHLAND WIDOW'S LAMENT.

[‘This pathetic ballad was wholly composed by Burns for the *Museum*, unless we except the exclamation : “Och-on, och-on, och-rie !” which appears in the old song composed on the massacre of Glencoe, inserted in the first volume of the *Museum*.’—STENHOUSE.]

Oh, I am come to the low Countrie,
 Och-on, och-on, och-rie !
 Without a penny in my purse,
 To buy a meal to me.

It was na sae in the Highland hills,
 Och-on, och-on, och-rie !
 Nae woman in the Country wide
 Sae happy was as me.

For then I had a score o’ kye,
 Och-on, och-on, och-rie !
 Feeding on yon hill sae high,
 And giving milk to me.

cattle

And there I had threescore o’ yowes,
 Och-on, och-on, och-rie :
 Skipping on yon bonny knowes,
 And casting woo’ to me.

sheep

knolls

I was the happiest of the Clan,
 Sair, sair may I repine ;
 For Donald was the brawest lad,
 And Donald he was mine.

finest

Till Charlie Stewart cam at last,
 Sae far to set us free ;
 My Donald’s arm was wanted then,
 For Scotland and for me.

Their waefu' fate what need I tell ?
 Right to the wrang did yield :
 My Donald and his Country fell
 Upon Culloden's field.

Och-on, O Donald, oh !
 Och-on, och-on, och-rie !
 Nae woman in the warld wide
 Sae wretched now as me.

O STEER HER UP.

TUNE—*O steer her up, and haud her gaun.*

[The first four lines of this song are part of an old song which appears in D'Urfey's Collection.]

O steer her up, and haud her gaun—	stir—keep her going
Her mother's at the mill, jo,	
And gin she winna take a man,	if
E'en let her tak her will, jo :	
First shore her wi' a gentle kiss,	threaten
And ca' anither gill, jo ;	call
And gin she take the thing amiss,	
E'en let her flyte her fill, jo.	scold

O steer her up, and be na blate,	bashful
And gin she tak it ill, jo,	
Then leave the lassie till her fate,	
And time nae langer spill, jo :	
Ne'er break your heart for ae rebute,	one rebuff
But think upon it still, jo ;	
Then gin the lassie winna do 't,	
Ye'll find another will, jo.	

WEE WILLIE GRAY.

[Written by Burns in imitation, and to the tune, of an old nursery-song called 'Wee Totum Fogg.']

Wee Willie Gray, and his leather wallet,
 Peel a willow-wand, to be him boots and jacket ;

The rose upon the breer will be him trews and doublet,
The rose upon the breer will be him trews and doublet.

Wee Willie Gray, and his leather wallet,
Twice a lily-flower will be him sark and cravat ; shirt
Feathers of a flee wad feather up his bonnet,
Feathers of a flee wad feather up his bonnet.

O AY MY WIFE SHE DANG ME.

TUNE—*My Wife she dang me.*

On peace an' rest my mind was bent,
And fool I was, I married ;
But never honest man's intent
Sae cursedly miscarried.

Chorus—O ay my wife she dang me, discomfited
And aft my wife she bang'd me, beat
If ye gie a woman a' her will,
Gude faith, she 'll soon o'ergang ye. master

Some sairie comfort at the last, sorry bit
When thir days are done, man ;
My pains o' hell on earth are past,
I'm sure o' bliss aboon, man. above

O GUID ALE COMES.

[Based on old indelicate song.]

O gude ale comes, and gude ale goes,
Gude ale gars me sell my hose, makes
Sell my hose and pawn my shoon ;
Gude ale keeps my heart aboon. above

I had sax owsen in a pleugh,
And they drew a' weel eneugh,
I sell'd them a' just ane by ane ;
Gude ale keeps the heart aboon.

SWEETEST MAY.

Sweetest May, let love inspire thee ;
Take a heart which he designs thee ;
As thy constant slave regard it ;
For its faith and truth reward it.

Proof o' shot to birth or money.
Not the wealthy but the bonny ;
Not high-born, but noble-minded,
In love's silken band can bind it.

Proof against the
attractions of

THERE WAS A BONNY LASS.

There was a bonie lass, and a bonie, bonie lass,
And she lo'ed her bonie laddie dear,
Till war's loud alarms tore her laddie frae her arms,
Wi' monie a sigh and a tear.

Over sea, over shore, where the cannons loudly roar,
He still was a stranger to fear ;
And nought could him quail, or his bosom assail,
But the bonie lass he lo'ed sae dear.

CROWDIE.

['The first verse of this song is old ; the second was written by Burns.'
—STENHOUSE.]

O That I had ne'er been married,
I wad never had nae care ;
Now I've gotten wife an' weans,
And they cry crowdie evermair.

children
oatmeal pudding

Chorus—Ance crowdie, twice crowdie,
Three times crowdie in a day ;
Gin ye crowdie ony mair,
Ye'll crowdie a' my meal away.

If

Waefu' Want and Hunger fley me, terrify
 Glowrin' by the hallan en' ; staring—cottage door
 Sair I fecht them at the door,
 But aye I'm eerie they come ben. fear lest—come in

THE BONIE MOOR HEN.

[This song was based on an old 'Crochallan' ditty.]

The heather was blooming, the meadows were mawn,
 Our lads gaed a-hunting, ae day at the dawn,
 O'er moors and o'er mosses and mony a glen.
 At length they discover'd a bonie moor-hen.

Chorus—I rede you, beware at the hunting, young men ;
 I rede you, beware at the hunting, young men ;
 Take some on the wing, and some as they spring,
 But cannily steal on a bonie moor-hen. cautiously

Sweet brushing the dew from the brown heather bells,
 Her colours betray'd her on yon mossy fells ;
 Her plumage outlustr'd the pride o' the spring,
 And O ! as she wanton'd sae gay on the wing.

Auld Phœbus himsel, as he peep'd o'er the hill,
 In spite at her plumage he try'd his skill ;
 He levell'd his rays where she bask'd on the brace— slope
 His rays were outshone, and but mark'd where she lay.

They hunted the valley, they hunted the hill,
 The best of our lads wi' the best o' their skill ;
 But still as the fairest she sat in their sight,
 Then, whirr ! she was over—a mile at a flight.

NOTES

TO

JOHNSON'S 'SCOTS MUSICAL MUSEUM.'

[In the latter part of his life, Burns procured an interleaved copy of Johnson's *Scots Musical Museum* for the purpose of jotting down his remarks on Scottish songs and airs, and all that he knew of their authors. The copy thus annotated he presented to Captain Riddel of Glenriddel.

THE HIGHLAND QUEEN.

The Highland Queen, music and poetry, was composed by a Mr M'Vicar, purser of the *Solbay* man-of-war. This I had from Dr Blacklock.

BESS THE GAWKIE.

This song shows that the Scottish Muses did not all leave us when we lost Ramsay and Oswald, as I have good reason to believe that the verses and music are both posterior to the days of these two gentlemen. It is a beautiful song, and in the genuine Scots taste. We have few pastoral compositions, I mean the pastoral of nature, that are equal to this.

O OPEN THE DOOR, LORD GREGORY.

It is somewhat singular that in Lanark, Renfrew, Ayr, Wigton, Kirkcudbright, and Dumfries Shires, there is scarcely an old song or tune which, from the title, &c., can be guessed to belong to, or be the production of, these counties. This, I conjecture, is one of these very few; as the ballad, which is a long one, is called, both by tradition and in printed collections, 'The Lass o' Lochroyan,' which I take to be Lochryan in Galloway.

THE BANKS OF THE TWEED.

This song is one of the many attempts that English composers have made to imitate the Scottish manner, and which I shall, in these strictures, beg leave to distinguish by the appellation of Anglo-Scottish productions. The music is pretty good, but the verses are just above contempt.

THE BEDS OF SWEET ROSES.

This song, as far as I know, for the first time appears here in print.— When I was a boy, it was a very popular song in Ayrshire. I remember to have heard those fanatics, the Buchanites, sing some of their nonsensical rhymes, which they dignify with the name of hymns, to this air.

ROSLIN CASTLE.

These beautiful verses were the production of a Richard Hewit, a young man that Dr Blacklock, to whom I am indebted for the anecdote, kept for some years as an amanuensis. I do not know who is the author of the second song to the tune. Tytler, in his amusing history of Scots music, gives the air to Oswald; but in Oswald's own collection of Scots tunes, where he affixes an asterisk to those he himself composed, he does not make the least claim to the tune.

SAW YE JOHNNIE CUMMIN? QUO' SHE.

This song, for genuine humor in the verses, and lively originality in the air, is unparalleled. I take it to be very old.

CLOUT THE CALDRON.

A tradition is mentioned in the *Bee*, that the second Bishop Chisholm of Dunblane, used to say, that if he was going to be hanged, nothing would soothe his mind so much by the way, as to hear 'Clout the Caldron' played.

I have met with another tradition that the old song

Hae ye onie pots or pans,
Or onie broken chanlers?

was composed on one of the Kennmure family, in the Cavalier times, and alluded to an amour he had, while under hiding, in the disguise of an itinerant tinker. The air is also known by the name of 'The Blacksmith and his apron,' which, from the rhythm, seems to have been a line of some old song to the tune.

SAW YE NAE MY PEGGIE?

This charming song is much older, and indeed superior to Ramsay's verses, 'The Toast,' as he calls them. There is another set of the words, much older still, and which I take to be the original one, but though it has a very great deal of merit, it is not quite ladies' reading.

The original words, for they can scarcely be called verses, seem to be as follows; a song familiar from the cradle to every Scottish ear:

Saw ye my Maggie,
Saw ye my Maggie,
Saw ye my Maggie
Linkin' o'er the lea?

High kilted was she,
High kilted was she,
High kilted was she,
Her coat aboon her knee, &c.

Though it by no means follows that the silliest verses to an air must, for that reason, be the original song; yet I take this ballad, of which I have quoted part, to be the old verses. The two songs in Ramsay, one of them evidently his own, are never to be met with in the fireside circle of our peasantry; while that which I take to be the old song, is in every shepherd's mouth. Ramsay, I suppose, had thought the old verses unworthy of a place in his collection.

THE FLOWERS OF EDINBURGH.

This song is one of the many effusions of Scots Jacobitism. The title, 'Flowers of Edinburgh' has no manner of connexion with the present verses, so I suspect there has been an older set of words, of which the title is all that remains.

By the bye, it is singular enough that the Scottish Muses were all Jacobites. I have paid more attention to every description of Scots songs than perhaps any body living has done, and I do not recollect one single stanza, or even the title of the most trifling Scots air, which has the least panegyric reference to the families of Nassau or Brunswick, while there are hundreds satirizing them. This may be thought no panegyric on the Scots poets; but I mean it as such. For myself, I would always take it as a compliment to have it said that my heart ran before my head—and surely the gallant, though unfortunate House of Stewart, the kings of our fathers for so many heroic ages, is a theme much more interesting than . . .

JAMIE GAY.

Jamie Gay is another and a tolerable Anglo-Scottish piece.

MY DEAR JOCKIE.

Another Anglo-Scottish production.

FYE, GAE RUB HER O'ER WI' STRAE.

It is self-evident that the first four lines of this song are part of a song more ancient than Ramsay's beautiful verses which are annexed to them. As music is the language of Nature; and poetry, particularly songs, are always less or more localized (if I may be allowed the verb) by some of the modifications of time and place, this is the reason why so many of our Scots airs have outlived their original, and perhaps many subsequent sets of verses; except a single name, or phrase, or sometimes one or two lines, simply to distinguish the tunes by.

To this day, among people who know nothing of Ramsay's verses, the following is the song, and all the song that ever I heard :—

Gin ye meet a bonie lassie,
 Gie her a kiss and let her gae;
 But gin ye meet a dirty hizzie,
 Fye, gae rub her o'er wi' strae.

Fye, gae rub her, rub her, rub her,
 Fye, gae rub her o'er wi' strae:
 And gin ye meet a dirty hizzie,
 Fye, gae rub her o'er wi' strae.

THE LASS O' LIVISTON.

The old song, in three eight-line stanzas, is well known, and has merit as to wit and humor; but it is rather unfit for insertion. It begins,

The bonie lass o' Liviston,
 Her name ye ken, her name ye ken,
 And she has written in her contract,
 To lie her lane, to lie her lane.
 &c., &c.

THE LAST TIME I CAME O'ER THE MOOR.*

[The last time I came o'er the muir,
 I left my love behind me;
 Ye gods, what pains do I endure,
 When saft ideas mind me, &c.]

* See Vol. III., p. 421.

Ramsay found the first line of this song, which had been preserved as the title of the charming air, and then composed the rest of the verses to suit that line. This has always a finer effect than composing English words, or words with an idea foreign to the spirit of the old title. Where old titles of songs convey any idea at all, it will generally be found to be quite in the spirit of the air.*

JOCKIE'S GRAY BREEKS.

Though this has certainly every evidence of being a Scottish air, yet there is a well known tune and song in the North of Ireland, called, 'The Weaver and his Shuttle O,' which, though sung much quicker, is every note the very tune.

THE HAPPY MARRIAGE.

Another, but very pretty, Anglo-Scottish piece.

THE LASS OF PEATY'S MILL.

In Sinclair's Statistical Account of Scotland, this song is localized (a verb I must use for want of another to express my idea) somewhere in the north of Scotland, and likewise is claimed by Ayrshire.—The following anecdote I had from the present Sir William Cunningham of Robertland, who had it from the last John Earl of Loudon.—The then Earl of Loudon and father to Earl John before mentioned, had Ramsay at Loudon, and one day walking together by the banks of Irvine water, when near New-Mills, at a place yet called Peaty's Mill, they were struck with the appearance of a beautiful country girl. His lordship observed that she would be a fine theme for a song. Allan lagged behind in returning to Loudon Castle, and at dinner produced this identical song.

THE TURNIMSPIKE.

There is a stanza of this excellent song for local humor, omitted in this set,—where I have placed the asterisms.

They tak the horse then by te head,
And tere tey mak her stan', man;
Me tell tem, me hae seen te day,
Tey no had sic comman', man.

* The title of this air in the Skene manuscript, circa 1620, is 'Alace that I cam o'er the Muir, and left my Love behind me.'

HIGHLAND LADDIE.*

As this was a favorite theme with our later Scottish Muses, there are several airs and songs of that name. That which I take to be the oldest is to be found in the *Musical Museum* (No. 332), beginning 'I hae been at Crookie-den.' One reason for my thinking so is that Oswald has it in his collection by the name of 'The Auld Highland Laddie.' It is also known by the name of 'Jinglan Johnie,' which is a well-known song of four or five stanzas, and seems to be an earlier song than Jacobite times. As a proof of this, it is little known to the peasantry by the name of 'Highland Laddie,' while every body knows 'Jinglan Johnie.' The song begins—

Jinglan John, the meickle man,
He met wi' a lass was blythe and bonie.

Another 'Highland Laddie' is also in the *Museum*, Vol. V. (No. 467), which I take to be Ramsay's original, as he has borrowed the chorus, 'O my bonie Highland Lad,' &c. It consists of three stanzas, besides the chorus, and has humor in its composition—it is an excellent, but somewhat licentious song, beginning—

As I cam o'er Cairney-Mount,
And down among the blooming heather.

This air, and the common 'Highland Laddie' seem to be only different sets.

Another 'Highland Laddie,' also in the *Museum*, Vol. V. (No. 468) is the tune of several Jacobite fragments. One of these old songs to it only exists, as far as I know, in these four lines—

Whare hae ye been a' day,
Bonie laddie, Highland laddie?
Down the back o' Bell's brae,
Courtin Maggie, courtin Maggie.

Another of this name is Dr Arne's beautiful air (No. 22, Vol. II.) called the 'New Highland Laddie.'

THE GENTLE SWAIN.

To sing such a beautiful air to such execrable verses, is downright * * * of common sense! The Scots verses indeed are tolerable.

HE STOLE MY TENDER HEART AWAY.

This is an Anglo-Scottish production, but by no means a bad one.

* See Vol. IV., pp. 341, 362.

FAIREST OF THE FAIR.

It is too barefaced to take Dr Percy's charming song, and by the means of transposing a few English words into Scots, to offer to pass it for a Scots song. I was not acquainted with the Editor until the first volume was nearly finished, else, had I known in time, I would have prevented such an impudent absurdity.

THE BLAITHRIE O'T.*

The following is a set of this song, which was the earliest song I remember to have got by heart. When a child, an old woman sung it to me, and I picked up every word at first hearing :—

O Willy, weel I mind, I lent you my hand,
To sing you a song which you did me command;
But my memory's so bad I had almost forgot
That you called it the gear and the blaithrie o't.

I'll not sing about confusion, delusion, or pride,
I'll sing about a laddie was for a virtuous bride;
For virtue is an ornament that time will never rot,
And preferable to gear and the blaithrie o't.

Though my lassie hae nae scarlets or silks to put on,
We envy not the greatest that sits upon the throne;
I wad rather hae my lassie, though she cam in her smock,
Than a princess wi' the gear and the blaithrie o't.

Though we hae nae horses or minzie at command, retinue
We will toil on our foot, and we'll work wi' our hand;
And when wearied without rest, we'll find it sweet in any spot,
And we'll value not the gear and the blaithrie o't.

If we hae ony babies, we'll count them as lent;
Hae we less, hae we mair, we will aye be content;
For they say they hae mair pleasure that wins but a groat,
Than the miser wi' his gear and the blaithrie o't.

I'll not meddle wi' th' affairs o' the kirk or the queen;
They're nae matters for a sang, let them sink, let them swim;
On your kirk I'll ne'er encroach, but I'll hold it still remote,
Sae tak this for the gear and the blaithrie o't.

* 'Shame fall the gear and the blad'ry o't' is the turn of an old Scottish song, spoken when a young handsome girl marries an old man upon the account of his wealth.—Kelly's *Scots Proverbs*.

MAY EVE, OR KATE OF ABERDEEN.

'Kate of Aberdeen' is, I believe, the work of poor Cunningham the player, of whom the following anecdote, though told before, deserves a recital:—A fat dignitary of the Church coming past Cunningham one Sunday, as the poor poet was plying a fishing-rod in some stream near Durham, his reverence reprimanded Cunningham very severely for such an occupation on such a day. The poor poet, with that inoffensive gentleness of manners which was his peculiar characteristic, replied, that he hoped God and his reverence would forgive his seeming profanity of that sacred day, '*as he had no dinner to eat but what lay at the bottom of that pool.*' This, Mr Woods the player, who knew Cunningham well and esteemed him much, assured me was true.

TWEED-SIDE.

[What beauties doth Flora disclose !
 How sweet are her smiles upon Tweed !
 Yet Mary's, still sweeter than those,
 Both nature and fancy exceed.
 Nor daisy, nor sweet blushing rose,
 Nor all the gay flowers of the field,
 Nor Tweed gliding gently through those,
 Such beauty and pleasure does yield, &c.]

In Ramsay's *Tea-table Miscellany*, he tells us that about thirty of the songs in that publication were the works of some young gentlemen of his acquaintance ; which songs are marked with the letters D. C., &c. Old Mr Tytler of Woodhouselee, the worthy and able defender of the beauteous Queen of Scots, told me that the songs marked C. in the *Tea-table*, were the composition of a Mr Crawford, of the house of Auchnames, who was afterwards unfortunately drowned coming from France. As Tytler was most intimately acquainted with Allan Ramsay, I think the anecdote may be depended on. Of consequence the beautiful song of 'Tweed-side' is Mr Crawford's, and indeed does great honor to his poetical talents. He was a Robert Crawford; the Mary he celebrates was a Mary Stewart, of the Castle-Milk family, afterwards married to a Mr Ritchie.*

I have seen a song, calling itself the 'Original Tweed-side,' and said to have been composed by a Lord Yester.† It consisted of two stanzas, of which I recollect the first—

* See notes on this subject in the new edition of Johnson's *Musical Museum*. Robert Crawford, author of the beautiful pastoral songs, 'Tweed-side' and the 'Bush aboon Traquair,' was a younger son of Patrick Crawford, third son of David Crawford, of Drumsay. He died in 1732, in the prime of life, unmarried. Burns has made a mistake in stating that he was of the house of Auchnames, and also in giving Mary Stewart as his heroine. See p. 381.

† Second Marquis of Tweeddale. He died in 1713, aged sixty-eight.

When Maggy and I was acquaint,
 I carried my noddle fu' hie ;
 Nae lintwhite on a' the green plain,
 Nor gowdspink sae happy as me :
 But I saw her sae fair, and I lo'ed :
 I woo'd, but I came nae great speed ;
 So now I maun wander abroad,
 And lay my banes far frae the Tweed.

THE POSIE.

It appears evident to me that Oswald composed his 'Roslin Castle' on the modulation of this air. In the second part of Oswald's, in the three first bars, he has either hit on a wonderful similarity to, or else he has entirely borrowed the three first bars of the old air ; and the close of both tunes is almost exactly the same. The old verses to which it was sung when I took down the notes from a country girl's voice, had no great merit. The following is a specimen :

There was a pretty may and a milkin' she went ;
 Wi' her red rosy cheeks, and her coal-black hair :
 And she has met a young man a comin o'er the bent,
 With a double and adieu to thee fair may.

O where are ye goin, my ain pretty may,
 Wi' thy red rosy cheeks, and thy coal-black hair ?
 Unto the yowes a milkin, kind sir, she says,
 With a double and adieu to thee fair may.

What if I gang alang wi' thee, my ain pretty may,
 Wi' thy red rosy cheeks, and thy coal-black hair ;
 Wad I be aught the warse o' that, kind sir, she says,
 With a double and adieu to thee fair may.

MARY'S DREAM.

The Mary here alluded to is generally supposed to be Miss Mary Macghie, daughter to the laird of Airds, in Galloway. The Poet was a Mr Alexander Lowe, who likewise wrote another beautiful song, called 'Pompey's Ghost.' I have seen a poetic epistle from him in North America, where he now is, or lately was, to a lady in Scotland. By the strain of the verses, it appeared that they allude to some love disappointment.

THE MAID THAT TENDS THE GOATS.

BY MR DUDGEON.

This Dudgeon is a respectable farmer's son in Berwickshire.

I WISH MY LOVE WERE IN A MIRE.

I never heard more of the words of this old song than the title.

ALLAN WATER.

This 'Allan Water,' which the composer of the music has honored with the name of the air, I have been told is Allan Water, in Strathallan.

THERE'S NAE LUCK ABOUT THE HOUSE.

This is one of the most beautiful songs in the Scots, or any other language. The two lines—

And will I see his face again?
And will I hear him speak?

as well as the two preceding ones, are unequalled almost by any thing I ever heard or read; and the lines

The present moment is our ain,
The neist we never saw,

are worthy of the first poet. It is long posterior to Ramsay's days. About the year 1771, or 72, it came first on the streets as a ballad; and I suppose the composition of the song was not much anterior to that period.

TARRY WOO.

This is a very pretty song; but I fancy that the first half-stanza, as well as the tune itself, are much older than the rest of the words.

GRAMACHREE.

The song of 'Gramachree' was composed by a Mr Poe, a counsellor-at-law in Dublin. This anecdote I had from a gentleman who knew the lady, the 'Molly,' who is the subject of the song, and to whom Mr Poe sent the first manuscript of his most beautiful verses. I do not remember any single line that has more true pathos than—

'How can she break that honest heart that wears her in its core!'

But as the song is Irish, it had nothing to do in the collection.

THE COLLIER'S BONIE LASSIE.

The first half stanza is much older than the days of Ramsay. The old words began thus :

The collier has a dochter, and, O, she's wonder bonie !
 A laird he was that sought her, rich baith in lands and money.
 She wad na hae a laird, nor wad she be a lady ;
 But she wad hae a collier, the color o' her daddie.

MY AIN KIND DEARIE, O.*

The old words of this song are omitted here, though much more beautiful than these inserted ; which were mostly composed by poor Fergusson, in one of his merry humors. The old words began thus :

I'll rowe thee o'er the lea-rig,
 My ain kind dearie, O,
 I'll rowe thee o'er the lea-rig,
 My ain kind dearie, O,
 Altho' the night were ne'er sae wat,
 And I were ne'er sae weary, O ;
 I'll rowe thee o'er the lea-rig,
 My ain kind dearie, O.

MARY SCOTT, THE FLOWER OF YARROW.†

Mr Robertson, in his statistical account of the parish of Selkirk, says, that Mary Scott, the Flower of Yarrow, was descended from the Dryhope, and married into the Harden family. Her daughter was married to a predecessor of the present Sir Francis Elliot of Stobbs, and of the late Lord Heathfield.

There is a circumstance in their contract of marriage that merits attention, as it strongly marks the predatory spirit of the times. The father-in-law, agrees to keep his daughter for some time after the marriage ; for which the son-in-law binds himself to give him the profits of the first Michaelmas moon !

DOWN THE BURN, DAVIE.‡

I have been informed that the tune of 'Down the Burn, Davie,' was the composition of David Maigh, keeper of the blood slough hounds, belonging to the Laird of Riddel, in Tweeddale.

* See Vol. III., pp. 354, 368.

† The song to which Burns appended this note was one by Robert Crawford, celebrating, not the Mary Scott of predatory times who bore the name of the 'Flower of Yarrow,' but a descendant of hers, who flourished in the early part of the eighteenth century, Miss Mary Lillias Scott, daughter of Walter Scott, Esq. of Harden, and who was also styled the 'Flower of Yarrow.' This lady was the true 'Mary' of 'Tweed-side.'

‡ See Vol. IV., p. 41.

BLINK O'ER THE BURN, SWEET BETTIE.

The old words, all that I remember, are,

Blink over the burn, sweet Betty,
 It is a cauld winter night;
 It rains, it hails, it thunders,
 The moon she gies nae light:
 It's a' for the sake o' sweet Betty,
 That ever I tint my way;
 Sweet, let me lie beyond thee
 Until it be break o' day.

O, Betty will bake my bread,
 And Betty will brew my ale,
 And Betty will be my love,
 When I come over the dale:
 Blink over the burn, sweet Betty,
 Blink over the burn to me,
 And while I hae life, dear lassie,
 My ain sweet Betty thou's be.

THE BLITHSOME BRIDAL.

I find the Blithsome Bridal, in James Watson's collection of Scots poems, printed at Edinburgh, in 1706. This collection, the publisher says, is the first of its nature which has been published in our own native Scots dialect—it is now extremely scarce.

JOHN HAY'S BONIE LASSIE.

John Hay's Bonie Lassie was daughter of John Hay, Earl or Marquis of Tweeddale, and late Countess Dowager of Roxburgh. She died at Broomlands, near Kelso, some time between the years 1720 and 1740.

THE BONIE BRUCKET LASSIE.

[The bonie brucket lassie,
 She's blue beneath the e'en;
 She was the fairest lassie
 That dancèd on the green:
 A lad he lo'ed her dearly,
 She did his love return;
 But he his vows has broken,
 And left her for to mourn, &c.]

The idea of this song is to me very original ; the first two lines are all of it that is old. The rest of the song, as well as those songs in the *Museum* marked T., are the works of an obscure, tippling, but extraordinary body of the name of Tytler, commonly known by the name of 'Balloon Tytler,' from his having projected a balloon ; a mortal who, though he drudges about Edinburgh as a common printer, with leaky shoes, a sky-lighted hat, and knee-buckles as unlike as George-by-the-grace-of-God, and Solomon-the-son-of-David : yet that same unknown, drunken mortal is author and compiler of three-fourths of Elliot's pompous *Encyclopædia Britannica*, which he composed at half a guinea a week !

SAE MERRY AS WE TWA HA'E BEEN.

This song is beautiful. The chorus in particular is truly pathetic. I never could learn any thing of its author.

Chorus—Sae merry as we twa ha'e been,
 Sae merry as we twa ha'e been ;
 My heart it is like for to break,
 When I think on the days we ha'e seen.

THE BANKS OF FORTH.

'This air is Oswald's.

THE BUSH ABOON TRAQUAIR.

This is another beautiful song of Mr Crawford's composition. In the neighbourhood of Traquair, tradition still shews the old 'Bush ;' which, when I saw it in the year 1787, was composed of eight or nine ragged birches. The Earl of Traquair has planted a clump of trees near by, which he calls 'The new Bush.'

CROMLET'S LILT.

[Since all thy vows, false maid,
 Are blown to air,
 And my poor heart betrayed
 To sad despair,
 Into some wilderness,
 My grief I will express,
 And thy hard-heartedness,
 O cruel fair !]

The following interesting account of this plaintive dirge was communicated to Mr Riddel by Alexander Fraser Tytler, Esq. of Woodhouselee :—

‘In the latter end of the 16th century, the eldest son of Chisholm of Cromlecks (an estate now possessed by the Drummonds) was much attached to a daughter of Stirling of Ardoch, commonly called Fair Helen of Ardoch. At that time, the opportunities of meeting betwixt the sexes were more rare, consequently more sought after than now; and the Scottish ladies, far from priding themselves on extensive literature, were thought sufficiently book-learned if they could make out the Scriptures in their mother-tongue. Writing was entirely out of the line of female education. At that period, the most of our young men of family sought a fortune, or found a grave in France, Cromlus, when he went abroad to the war, was obliged to leave the management of his correspondence with his mistress to a lay-brother of the monastery of Dumblane, in the immediate neighbourhood of Cromleck, and near Ardoch. This man, unfortunately, was deeply sensible of Helen’s charms. He artfully prepossessed her with stories to the disadvantage of Cromlus, and, by misinterpreting or keeping up the letters and messages intrusted to his care, he entirely irritated both. All connection was broken off betwixt them: Helen was inconsolable, and Cromlus has left behind him, in the ballad called ‘Cromlet’s Lilt,’ a proof of the elegance of his genius, as well as the steadiness of his love.

‘When the artful monk thought time had sufficiently softened Helen’s sorrow, he proposed himself as a lover. Helen was obdurate: but at last, overcome by the persuasions of her brother, with whom she lived, and who, having a family of thirty-one children, was probably very well pleased to get her off his hands, she submitted, rather than consented, to the ceremony; but there her compliance ended: and, when forcibly put into bed, she started quite frantic from it, screaming out, that after three gentle taps on the wainscot, at the bed-head, she heard Cromlus’s voice, crying: “Helen, Helen, mind me!” Cromlus soon after coming home, the treachery of the confidant was discovered, her marriage annulled, and Helen became Lady Cromlecks.’

N.B.—Marg. Murray, mother to these thirty-one children, was daughter to Murray, of Stewn, one of the seventeen sons of Tullybardine, and whose youngest son, commonly called the Tutor of Ardoch, died in the year 1715, aged 111 years.

MY DEARIE, IF THOU DIE.

Another beautiful song of Crawford’s.

SHE ROSE AND LET ME IN.

The old set of this song, which is still to be found in printed collections, is much prettier than this; but somebody, I believe it was

Ramsay, took it into his head to clear it of some seeming indelicacies, and made it at once more chaste and more dull.

GO TO THE EWE-BUGHTS, MARION.

I am not sure if this old and charming air be of the South, as is commonly said, or of the North of Scotland. There is a song apparently as ancient as, 'Owe-bughts, Marion,' which sings to the same tune, and is evidently of the North. It begins thus :

The Lord o' Gordon had three dochters,
Mary, Marget, and Jean,
They wad na stay at bonie Castle Gordon,
But awa to Aberdeen.

LEWIS GORDON.

[Oh ! send Lewie Gordon hame,
And the lad I maunna name ;
Though his back be at the wa',
Here's to him that's far awa' !
O hon ! my Highlandman,
O my bonny Highlandman !
Weel would I my true-love ken,
Amang ten thousand Highlandmen, &c.]

This air is a proof how one of our Scots tunes comes to be composed out of another. I have one of the earliest copies of the song, and it has prefixed,

Tune of Tarry Woo ;

of which tune a different set has insensibly varied into a different air. To a Scots critic, the pathos of the line,

'Though his back be at the wa','

must be very striking. It needs not a Jacobite prejudice to be affected with this song. The supposed author of the song was a Mr Geddes, priest, at Shenval, in the Ainzie.

OH ONO CHRIO.

Dr Blacklock informed me that this song was composed on the infamous massacre of Glencoe.

I'LL NEVER LEAVE THEE.

This is another of Crawford's songs, but I do not think in his happiest manner. What an absurdity, to join such names as Adonis and Mary together.

CORN RIGS ARE BONIE.*

All the old words that ever I could meet to this air were the following, which seem to have been an old chorus :

O corn rigs and rye rigs,
O corn rigs are bonie ;
And where'er you meet a bonie lass,
Preen up her cockernony.

THE MUCKING OF GORDIE'S BYRE.

The chorus of this song is old ; the rest is the work of Balloon Tytler.

BIDE YE YET.

There is a beautiful song to this tune, beginning :

'Alas, my son, you little know,'

which is the composition of a Miss Jenny Graham, of Dumfries.

WAUKIN O' THE FAULD.

There are two stanzas still sung to this tune, which I take to be the original song whence Ramsay composed his beautiful song of that name in the *Gentle Shepherd*. It begins :

O will ye speak at our town,
As ye come frae the fauld, &c.

I regret that, as in many of our old songs, the delicacy of this old fragment is not equal to its wit and humor.

TRANENT-MUIR.†

[The Chevalier, being void of fear,
Did march up Birsley Brae, man,
And through Tranent, ere he did stent,
As fast as he could gae, man, &c.]

Composed by a Mr Skirvan, a very worthy, respectable farmer, near Haddington. I have heard the anecdote often that Lieutenant Smith, whom he satirises in the ninth stanza, came to Haddington after the

* See Vol. I., p. 97.

† The subject of this song is the battle of Preston, fought September 1745, between the government forces, under General Cope, and the Highland army, under Prince Charles Edward.

publication of the song, and sent a challenge to Skirvan to meet him there, and answer for the unworthy manner in which he had noticed him in his song.—‘Gang awa back,’ said the honest farmer, ‘and tell Mr Smith that I hae nae leisure to come to Haddington; but tell him to come here, and I’ll tak a look o’ him; and if I think I’m fit to fecht him I’ll fecht him; and if no, I’ll do as he did—I’ll rin awa’!’

TO THE WEAVERS GIN YE GO.*

The Chorus of this song is old, the rest of it is mine. Here, once for all, let me apologize for many silly compositions of mine in this work. Many beautiful airs wanted words; in the hurry of other avocations, if I could string a parcel of rhymes together any thing near tolerable, I was fain to let them pass. He must be an excellent poet indeed, whose every performance is excellent.

POLWARTH ON THE GREEN.

The author of ‘Polwarth on the Green’ is Captain John Drummond M’Grigor of the family of Bochalddie.

STREPHON AND LYDIA.

[All lonely on the sultry beach,
 Expiring Strephon lay,
 No hand the cordial draught to reach,
 Nor cheer the gloomy way.
 Ill-fated youth! no parent nigh,
 To catch thy fleeting breath,
 No bride to fix thy swimming eye,
 Or smooth the face of death.
 Far distant from the mournful scene,
 Thy parents sit at ease,
 Thy Lydia rifles all the plain,
 And all the spring to please.
 Ill-fated youth! by fault of friend,
 Not force of foe depressed,
 Thou fall’st, alas! thyself, thy kind,
 Thy country, unredressed!]

The following account of this song I had from Dr Blacklock :

The Strephon and Lydia mentioned in the song were perhaps the loveliest couple of their time. The gentleman was commonly known by the name of Beau Gibson. The lady was the ‘Gentle Jean’ celebrated somewhere in Mr Hamilton of Bangour’s poems. Having frequently met

* See Vol. IV., p. 328.

in public places, they had formed a reciprocal attachment, which their friends thought dangerous, as their resources were by no means adequate to their tastes and habits of life. To elude the bad consequences of such a connexion, Strephon was sent abroad with a commission, and perished in Admiral Vernon's expedition to Carthage.

The author of the song was William Wallace, Esq. of Cairnhill, in Ayrshire.

I'M O'ER YOUNG TO MARRY YET.*

The chorus of this song is old.—The rest of it, such as it is, is mine.

M'PHERSON'S FAREWEL.†

M'Pherson, a daring robber, in the beginning of this century, was condemned to be hanged at the assizes at Inverness. He is said, when under sentence of death, to have composed this tune, which he called his own lament, or farewell.

Gow has published a variation of this fine tune as his own composition, which he calls, 'The Princess Augusta.'

MY JO, JANET.

Johnson, the publisher, with a foolish delicacy, refused to insert the last stanza of this humorous ballad.

THE SHEPHERD'S COMPLAINT.

The words by a Mr R. Scott, from the town or neighbourhood of Biggar.

THE BIRKS OF ABERFELDY.‡

I composed these stanzas standing under the falls of Aberfeldy, at, or near, Moness.

THE HIGHLAND LASSIE O.§

This was a composition of mine in very early life, before I was known at all in the world. My Highland lassie was a warm-hearted, charming young creature as ever blessed a man with generous love. After a pretty long tract of the most ardent reciprocal attachment, we met by appointment, on the second Sunday of May, in a sequestered spot by the Banks of Ayr, where we spent the day in taking a farewell,

* See Vol. IV., p. 329.

† See Vol. II., p. 285.

‡ See Vol. II., p. 159.

§ See Vol. I., p. 340.

before she should embark for the West Highlands, to arrange matters among her friends for our projected change of life. At the close of autumn following she crossed the sea to greet me at Greenock, where she had scarce landed when she was seized with a malignant fever, which hurried my dear girl to the grave in a few days, before I could even hear of her illness.

FIFE, AND A' THE LANDS ABOUT IT.

This song is Dr Blacklock's. He, as well as I, often gave Johnson verses, trifling enough perhaps, but they served as a vehicle to the music.

WERE NA MY HEART LIGHT I WAD DIE.

Lord Hailes, in the notes to his collection of ancient Scots poems, says that this song was the composition of a Lady Grissel Baillie, daughter of the first Earl of Marchmont, and wife of George Baillie, of Jerviswood.

THE YOUNG MAN'S DREAM.

This song is the composition of Balloon Tytler.

STRATHALLAN'S LAMENT.*

This air is the composition of one of the worthiest and best hearted men living—Allan Masterton, schoolmaster in Edinburgh. As he and I were both sprouts of Jacobitism, we agreed to dedicate the words and air to that cause.

To tell the matter of fact, except when my passions were heated by some accidental cause, my Jacobitism was merely by way of, *vive la bagatelle*.

UP IN THE MORNING EARLY.†

The chorus of this is old; the two stanzas are mine.

THE TEARS OF SCOTLAND.

Dr Blacklock told me that Smollett, who was at bottom a great Jacobite, composed these beautiful and pathetic verses on the infamous depredations of the Duke of Cumberland after the battle of Culloden.

* See Vol. II., p. 287.

† See Vol. IV., p. 330.

WHAT WILL I DO GIN MY HOGGIE DIE?*

Dr Walker, who was minister at Moffat in 1772, and is now (1791) Professor of Natural History in the University of Edinburgh, told the following anecdote concerning this air.—He said that some gentlemen riding a few years ago, through Liddesdale, stopped at a hamlet consisting of a few houses, called Moss Platt; when they were struck with this tune, which an old woman, spinning on a rock at her door, was singing. All she could tell concerning it was, that she was taught it when a child, and it was called, ‘What will I do gin my Hoggie die?’ No person, except a few females at Moss Platt, knew this fine old tune; which, in all probability, would have been lost, had not one of the gentlemen, who happened to have a flute with him, taken it down.

I DREAM'D I LAY WHERE FLOWERS WERE SPRINGING.†

These two stanzas I composed when I was seventeen, and are among the oldest of my printed pieces.

AH! THE POOR SHEPHERD'S MOURNFUL FATE.

TUNE—*Gallashiels*.

The old title, ‘Sour Plums o’ Gallashiels,’ probably was the beginning of a song to this air, which is now lost.

The tune of Gallashiels was composed about the beginning of the present century by the Laird of Gallashiel’s piper.

THE BANKS OF THE DEVON.‡

These verses were composed on a charming girl, a Miss Charlotte Hamilton, who is now married to James M’Kitrick Adair, Esq., physician. She is sister to my worthy friend Gavin Hamilton, of Mauchline; and was born on the banks of Ayr, but was, at the time I wrote these lines, residing at Herveyston, in Clackmannanshire, on the romantic banks of the little river Devon. I first heard the air from a lady in Inverness, and got the notes taken down for this work.

MILL, MILL O.

The original, or at least a song evidently prior to Ramsay’s, is still extant. It runs thus,

* See Vol. IV., p. 334.

† See Vol. I., p. 52.

‡ See Vol. II., p. 212.

Chorus—The mill, mill O, and the kill, kill O,
 And the coggin o' Peggy's wheel O,
 The sack and the sieve, and a' she did leave,
 And danc'd the miller's reel O.

As I cam down yon waterside,
 And by yon shellin-hill O,
 There I spied a bonie, bonie lass,
 And a lass that I lov'd right weel O.

WE RAN AND THEY RAN.

The author of 'We ran and they ran' was a Rev. Mr Murdoch M'Lennan, minister at Crathie, Dee-side.

WALY, WALY.

In the west country I have heard a different edition of the 2d stanza. Instead of the four lines, beginning with, 'When cockle-shells, &c.,' the other way ran thus :

O wherefore need I busk my head,
 Or wherefore need I kame my hair,
 Sin my fause luv has me forsook,
 And says, he'll never luv me mair.

DUNCAN GRAY.*

Dr Blacklock informed me that he had often heard the tradition that this air was composed by a carman in Glasgow.

DUMBARTON DRUMS.

[Dumbarton's drums beat bonny, O,
 When they mind me o' my dear Johnnie, O.
 How happy am I,
 With my soldier sitting by,
 When he kisses and blesses his Annie, O, &c.]

This is the last of the West Highland airs;† and from it, over the whole tract of country to the confines of Tweedside, there is hardly a tune or song that one can say has taken its origin from any place or

* See Vol. III., p. 370.

† Burns argues that it is a west-country air, from its reference to Dumbarton; but the probability is that the drums alluded to were those of Dumbarton's regiment—namely, the regiment commanded by the Earl of Dumbarton.

transaction in that part of Scotland. The oldest Ayrshire reel is 'Stewarton Lasses,' which was made by the father of the present Sir Walter Montgomery Cunningham, *alias* Lord Lysle, since which period there has indeed been local music in that county in great plenty. 'Johnie Faa' is the only old song which I could ever trace as belonging to the extensive county of Ayr.

CAULD KAIL IN ABERDEEN.*

This song is by the Duke of Gordon. The old verses are,

There's cauld kail in Aberdeen,
And Castocks in Strathbogie;
When ilka lad maun hae his lass,
Then fye, gie me my coggie.

Chorus—My coggie, Sirs, my coggie, Sirs,
I cannot want my coggie:
I wadna gie my three-girred cap
For e'er a quene on Bogie.

There's Johnie Smith has got a wife
That scrimps him o' his coggie,
If she were mine, upon my life,
I wad douk her in a bogie.
My coggie, Sirs, &c.

FOR LAKE OF GOLD.

The country girls in Ayrshire, instead of the line—

She me forsook for a great duke,
say,
For Athole's duke she me forsook;

which I take to be the original reading.

These words were composed by the late Dr Austin, physician at Edinburgh.—He had courted a lady, to whom he was shortly to have been married; but the Duke of Athole having seen her, became so much in love with her, that he made proposals of marriage, which were accepted of, and she jilted the doctor.

HERE'S A HEALTH TO MY TRUE LOVE, &c.

This song is Dr Blacklock's.—He told me that tradition gives the air to our James IV. of Scotland.

* See Vol. II. pp. 201, 202, 203.

HEY TUTTI TAIT.*

I have met the tradition universally over Scotland, and particularly about Stirling, in the neighbourhood of the scene, that this air was Robert Bruce's march at the battle of Bannockburn.

RAVING WINDS AROUND HER BLOWING.†

I composed these verses on Miss Isabella M'Leod of Raza, alluding to her feelings on the death of her sister, and the still more melancholy death of her sister's husband, the late Earl of Loudon; who shot himself out of sheer heart-break at some mortifications he suffered, owing to the deranged state of his finances.

TAK YOUR AULD CLOAK ABOUT YE.

A part of this old song according to the English set of it, is quoted in Shakspeare.

YE GODS, WAS STREPHON'S PICTURE BLEST.

TUNE—*Fourteenth of October.*

The title of this air shews that it alludes to the famous King Crispian, the patron of the honorable corporation of Shoemakers.—St Crispian's day falls on the fourteenth of October, old style, as the old proverb tells:

On the fourteenth of October,
Was ne'er a sutor sober.

SINCE ROBB'D OF ALL THAT CHARM'D MY VIEWS.

The old name of this air is, 'The Blossom o' the Raspberry.' The song is Dr Blacklock's.

YOUNG DAMON.

This air is by Oswald.

KIRK WAD LET ME BE.

[I am a puir silly auld man,
And hirpling o'er a tree,
Yet fain, fain kiss wad I,
An the kirk wad let me be, &c.]

* See Vol. IV., p. 37.

† See Vol. II., p. 288.

Tradition, in the western parts of Scotland, tells that this old song, 'An the kirk wad let me be' (of which there are still three stanzas extant), once saved a covenanting clergyman out of a scrape. It was a little prior to the Revolution—a period when being a Scots Covenanter was being a felon—that one of their clergy, who was at that time hunted by the merciless soldiery, fell in, by accident, with a party of the military. The soldiers were not exactly acquainted with the person of the reverend gentleman of whom they were in search; but from suspicious circumstances they fancied that they had got one of that cloth and opprobrious persuasion among them in the person of this stranger. 'Mass John,' to extricate himself, assumed a freedom of manners very unlike the gloomy strictness of his sect; and, among other convivial exhibitions sung (and some traditions say *composed* on the spur of the occasion) 'Kirk wad let me be' with such effect, that the soldiers swore he was a d——d honest fellow, and that it was impossible he could belong to those hellish conventicles; and so gave him his liberty.

The first stanza of this song, a little altered, is a favorite kind of dramatic interlude acted at country weddings, in the south-west parts of the kingdom. A young fellow is dressed up like an old beggar; a peruke, commonly made of carded tow, represents hoary locks; an old bonnet; a ragged plaid, or surtout, bound with a straw-rope for a girdle; a pair of old shoes, with straw-ropes twisted round his ancles, as is done by shepherds in snowy weather; his face they disguise as like wretched old age as they can: in this plight he is brought into the wedding-house, frequently to the astonishment of strangers who are not in the secret, and begins to sing—

[Oh, I am a silly auld man,
My name it is auld Glenae,* &c.]

He is asked to drink, and by and by to dance, which, after some uncouth excuses, he is prevailed on to do, the fiddler playing the tune (which here is commonly called 'Auld Glenae'); in short, he is all the time so plied with liquor that he is understood to get intoxicated, and, with all the ridiculous gesticulations of an old drunken beggar, he dances and staggers until he falls on the floor; yet still in all his riot, nay, in his rolling and tumbling on the floor, with one or other drunken motion of his body, he beats time to the music, till at last he is supposed to be carried out *dead drunk*.

MUSING ON THE ROARING OCEAN.†

I composed these verses out of compliment to a Mrs M'Lachlan, whose husband is an officer in the East Indies.

* Glenae, on the small river Ae, in Annandale; the seat and designation of an ancient branch, and the present representative, of the gallant and unfortunate Dalzels of Caruath. (This is the *Author's* note.)

† See Vol. II., p. 289.

BLYTHE WAS SHE.*

I composed these verses while I stayed at Ochtertyre with Sir William Murray.—The lady, who was also at Ochtertyre at the same time, was the well-known toast, Miss Euphemia Murray of Lentrose, who was called, and very justly, The Flower of Srathmore.

JOHNNY FAA, OR THE GYPSIE LADDIE.

The people in Ayrshire begin this song—

The gypsies cam to my Lord Cassilis' yett.

They have a great many more stanzas in this song than I ever yet saw in any printed copy.—The castle is still remaining at Maybole, where his lordship shut up his wayward spouse and kept her for life.

TO DAUNTON ME.†

The two following old stanzas to this tune have some merit :

To daunton me, to daunton me,
O ken ye what it is that'll daunton me?
There's eighty-eight and eighty-nine,
And a' that I hae borne sinsyne,
There's cess and press and Presbytrie,
I think it will do meikle for to daunton me.

But to wanton me, to wanton me,
O ken ye what it is that wad wanton me?
To see gude corn upon the rigs,
And banishment amang the Whigs,
And right restored where right sud be,
I think it would do meikle for to wanton me.

THE BONIE LASS MADE THE BED TO ME.‡

'The Bonie Lass made the bed to me,' was composed on an amour of Charles II. when sculking in the North, about Aberdeen, in the time of the usurpation. He formed *une petite affaire* with a daughter of the house of Port-letham, who was the 'lass that made the bed to him : '—two verses of it are,

I kiss'd her lips sae rosy red,
While the tear stood blinkin in her e'e;
I said my lassie dinna cry
For ye ay shall mak the bed to me.

* See Vol. II., p. 193.

† See Vol. IV., p. 332.

‡ See Vol. IV., p. 360.

She took her mither's winding sheet,
 And o't she made a sark to me;
 Blythe and merry may she be,
 The lass that made the bed to me.

ABSENCE.

A song in the manner of Shenstone.
 This song and air are both by Dr Blacklock.

I HAD A HORSE AND I HAD NAE MAIR.

This story was founded on fact. A John Hunter, ancestor to a very respectful farming family who live in a place in the parish, I think, of Galston, called Barr-mill, was the luckless hero that 'had a horse and had nae mair.'—For some little youthful follies he found it necessary to make a retreat to the West Highlands, where 'he feed himself to a Highland Laird,' for that is the expression of all the oral editions of the song I ever heard.—The present Mr Hunter, who told me the anecdote, is the great-grandchild to our hero.

UP AND WARN A' WILLIE.

This edition of the song I got from Tom Niel, of facetious fame, in Edinburgh. The expression, 'Up and warn a' Willie,' alludes to the Crantara, or warning of a Highland Clan to arms. Notwithstanding this, the Lowlanders in the west, and south, say, 'Up and waur them a',' &c.

A ROSE-BUD BY MY EARLY WALK.*

This song I composed on Miss Jenny Cruikshank, only child to my worthy friend Mr Wm. Cruikshank, of the High School, Edinburgh. This air is by a David Sillar, quondam Merchant, and now Schoolmaster in Irvine. He is the Davie to whom I address my printed poetical epistle in the measure of the 'Cherry and the Slae.'

AULD ROB MORRIS.†

It is remark-worthy that the song of 'Hooly and Fairly,' in all the old editions of it, is called 'The Drunken Wife o' Galloway,' which localizes it to that country.

* See Vol. II., p. 199.

† See Vol. III., p. 369.

RATTLIN, ROARIN WILLIE.*

The last stanza of this song is mine; it was composed out of compliment to one of the worthiest fellows in the world, William Dunbar, Esq., writer to the signet, Edinburgh, and Colonel of the Crochallan corps, a club of wits who took that title at the time of raising the fencible regiments.

WHERE BRAVING ANGRY WINTER'S STORMS.†

This song I composed on one of the most accomplished of women, Miss Peggy Chalmers that was, now Mrs Lewis Hay, of Forbes and Co.'s bank, Edinburgh.

TIBBIE, I HAE SEEN THE DAY.‡

This song I composed about the age of seventeen.

NANCY'S GHOST.

This song is by Dr Blacklock.

TUNE YOUR FIDDLES.

[Tune your fiddles, tune them sweetly,
 Play the Marquis' reel discreetly,
 Here are we a band completely,
 Fitted to be jolly.
 Come, my boys, be blithe and gaucy,
 Every youngster choose his lassie,
 Dance wi' life, and be not saucy,
 Shy nor melancholy, &c.]

This song was composed by the Rev. John Skinner, nonjuror clergyman at Linshart, near Peterhead. He is likewise the author of 'Tullochgorum,' 'Ewie wi' the crooked horn,' 'John o' Badenyond,' &c.; and what is of still more consequence, he is one of the worthiest of mankind. He is also the author of an ecclesiastical history of Scotland. The air is by Mr Marshall, butler to the Duke of Gordon, the first composer of strathspeys in the age. I have been told by somebody who had it of Marshall himself, that he took the idea of his three most celebrated pieces, 'Marquis of Huntly's Reel,' his 'Farewell,' and 'Miss Admiral Gordon's Reel,' from the old air, 'The German Lairdie.'

* See Vol. II., p. 54.

† See Vol. II., p. 207.

‡ See Vol. I., p. 52.

GILL MORICE.

This plaintive ballad ought to have been called 'Child Maurice,' and not 'Gill Morice.' In its present dress, it has gained immortal honor from Mr Home's taking from it the ground-work of his fine tragedy of *Douglas*. But I am of opinion that the present ballad is a modern composition; perhaps not much above the age of the middle of the last century; at least I should be glad to see or hear of a copy of the present words prior to 1650. That it was taken from an old ballad, called 'Child Maurice,' now lost, I am inclined to believe; but the present one may be classed with 'Hardyknute' (first printed in 1719), 'Kenneth,' 'Duncan, the 'Laird of Woodhouselee,' 'Lord Livingston,' 'Binnorie,' 'The Death of Monteith,' and several other modern productions, which have been swallowed by many readers, as ancient fragments of old poems.

This beautiful, plaintive tune was composed by Mr M'Gibbon, the selector of a collection of Scots tunes. ROBT. RIDDEL.

In addition to the observations on 'Gill Morris,' I add, that of the songs which Captain Riddel mentions, 'Kenneth' and 'Duncan' are juvenile compositions of Mr M'Kenzie, 'The Man of Feeling.' M'Kenzie's father shewed them in MSS. to Dr Blacklock, as the productions of his son, from which the Doctor rightly prognosticated that the young poet would make, in his more advanced years a respectable figure in the world of letters. This I had from Blacklock. R. B.

TIBBIE DUNBAR.*

This tune is said to be the composition of John M'Gill, fiddler, in Girvan. He called it after his own name.

WHEN I UPON THY BOSOM LEAN.

This song was the work of a very worthy, facetious old fellow, John Lapraik, late of Dalfram, near Muirkirk; which little property he was obliged to sell in consequence of some connection as security for some persons concerned in that villanous bubble, The Ayr Bank. He has often told me that he composed this song one day when his wife had been fretting o'er their misfortunes.

MY HARRY WAS A GALLANT GAY.†

TUNE—*Highlander's Lament*.

The oldest title I ever heard to this air was, 'The Highland Watch's Farewel to Ireland.' The chorus I picked up from an old woman in Dunblane; the rest of the song is mine.

* See Vol. III., p. 153.

† See Vol. III., p. 154.

THE HIGHLAND CHARACTER.

This tune was the composition of Gen. Reid, and called by him 'The Highland, or 42d Regiment's March.'

The words are by Sir Harry Erskine.

LEADER HAUGHS AND YARROW.

There is in several collections, the old song of 'Leader Haughs and Yarrow.' It seems to have been the work of one of our itinerant minstrels, as he calls himself, at the conclusion of his song, 'Minstrel Burn.'

THE TAILOR FELL THRO' THE BED, THIMBLE AN' A'.

This air is the march of the Corporation of Tailors. The second and fourth stanzas are mine.

BEWARE O' BONIE ANN.*

I composed this song out of compliment to Miss Ann Masterton, the daughter of my friend, Allan Masterton, the author of the air of 'Strathallan's Lament,' and two or three others in this work.

THIS IS NO MINE AIN HOUSE.

The first half stanza is old, the rest is Ramsay's. The old words are :

O this is no mine ain house,
 My ain house, my ain house ;
 This is no mine ain house,
 I ken by the biggin o't.

There's bread and cheese are my door-cheeks,
 Are my door-cheeks, are my door-cheeks ;
 There's bread and cheese are my door-cheeks,
 And pan-cakes the riggin o't.

This is no my ain wean,
 My ain wean, my ain wean ;
 This is no my ain wean,
 I ken by the greetie o't.

* See Vol. III., p. 155.

I'll tak the curchie aff my head,
 Aff my head, aff my head;
 I'll tak the curchie aff my head,
 And row't about the feetie o't.

The tune in an Old Highland air, called Shuan truish willighan.

LADDIE, LIE NEAR ME.

This song is by Blacklock.

THE GARDENER WI' HIS PAIDLE.*

This air is the 'Gardener's March.' The title of the song only is old ; the rest is mine.

THE DAY RETURNS, MY BOSOM BURNS.†

TUNE—*Seventh of November.*

I composed this song out of compliment to one of the happiest and worthiest married couples in the world, Robert Riddel, Esq. of Glenriddel, and his lady. At their fire-side I have enjoyed more pleasant evenings than at all the houses of fashionable people in this country put together ; and to their kindness and hospitality I am indebted for many of the happiest hours of my life.

THE GABERLUNZIE-MAN.

The Gaberlunzie-Man is supposed to commemorate an intrigue of James the Vth. Mr Callander of Craigforth published some years ago an edition of 'Christ's Kirk on the Green,' and the 'Gaberlunzie-Man,' with notes critical and historical. James the Vth is said to have been fond of Gosford, in Aberlady Parish, and that it was suspected by his contemporaries, that in his frequent excursions to that part of the country he had other purposes in view besides golfing and archery. Three favorite ladies, Sandilands, Weir, and Oliphant (one of them resided at Gosford, and the others in the neighbourhood), were occasionally visited by their royal and gallant admirer, which gave rise to the following satirical advice to His Majesty from Sir David Lindsay, of the Mount ; Lord Lyon :

Sow not your seed on Sandylands,
 Spend not your strength in Weir,
 And ride not on an Elephant,
 For spoiling o' your gear.

* See Vol. III., p. 153.

† See Vol. II., p. 377.

MY BONNIE MARY.*

This air is Oswald's; the first half stanza of the song is old, the rest mine.

THE BLACK EAGLE.

This song is by Dr Fordyce, whose merits as a prose writer are well known.

JAMIE COME TRY ME.†

This air is Oswald's; the song mine.

THE LAZY MIST.‡

This song is mine.

JOHNIE COPE.

This satirical song was composed to commemorate General Cope's defeat at Preston Pans, in 1745, when he marched against the Clans.

This air was the tune of an old song, of which I have heard some verses, but now only remember the title, which was,

Will ye go to the coals in the morning.

I LOVE MY JEAN.§

This air is by Marshal; the song I composed out of compliment to Mrs Burns.

N.B.—It was during the honeymoon.

CEASE, CEASE, MY DEAR FRIEND, TO EXPLORE.

This song is by Dr Blacklock; I believe, but am not quite certain, that the air is his too.

AULD ROBIN GRAY.

This air was formerly called, 'The Bridegroom greets when the Sun gangs down.'

* See Vol. II., p. 393.

† See Vol. II., p. 388.

‡ See Vol. IV., p. 338.

§ See Vol. II., p. 347.

DONALD AND FLORA.

This is one of those fine Gaelic tunes, preserved from time immemorial in the Hebrides ; they seem to be the ground-work of many of our finest Scots pastoral tunes. The words of this song were written to commemorate the unfortunate expedition of General Burgoyne in America, in 1777.

O WERE I ON PARNASSUS' HILL.*

This air is Oswald's ; the song I made out of compliment to Mrs Burns.

THE CAPTIVE RIBBAND.†

This air is called ' Robie donna Gorach.'

THERE'S A YOUTH IN THIS CITY.

This air is claimed by Neil Gow, who calls it his lament for his brother. The first half-stanza of the song is old ; the rest is mine.

There's a youth in this city, it were a great pity
 That he from our lasses should wander awa ;
 For he's bonie and braw, weel-favor'd with a',
 And his hair has a natural buckle and a'.
 His coat is the hue of his bonnet sae blue ;
 His fecket is white as the new-driven snaw ;
 His hose they are blae, and his shoon like the slae,
 And his clear siller buckles they dazzle us a'.
 His coat is the hue, &c.

For beauty and fortune the laddie's been courtin' ;
 Weel-featur'd, weel-tocher'd, weel-mounted and braw ;
 But chiefly the siller, *that* gars him gang till her,
 The pennie's the jewel that beautifies a'.
 There's Meg wi' the mailin, that fain wad a haen him,
 And Susy whase daddy was Laird o' the ha' ;
 There's lang-tocher'd Nancy maist fetters his fancy,
 But the laddie's dear sel he lo'es dearest of a'.

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS.‡

The first half-stanza of this song is old ; the rest is mine.

* See Vol. II., p. 348.

† See Vol. IV., p. 106.

‡ See Vol. III., p. 160.

CA' THE EWES TO THE KNOWES.*

This beautiful song is in the true old Scotch taste, yet I do not know that either air, or words, were in print before.

THE BRIDAL O'T.

This song is the work of a Mr Alexander Ross, late Schoolmaster at Lochlee; and author of a beautiful Scots poem, called the 'Fortunate Shepherdess.'

TOTLEN HAME.

This is perhaps the first bottle song that ever was composed.

THE BRAES O' BALLOCHMYLE.†

This air is the composition of my friend Allan Masterton, in Edinburgh. I composed the verses on the amiable and excellent family of Whitefoord's leaving Ballochmyle, when Sir John's misfortunes had obliged him to sell the estate.

THE RANTIN DOG THE DADDIE O'T.

I composed this song pretty early in life, and sent it to a young girl, a very particular friend of mine, who was at that time under a cloud.

O wha my babie-clouts will buy?
Wha will tent me when I cry?
Wha will kiss me whare I lie?
The rantin dog the daddie o't.

Wha will own he did the faut?
Wha will by my groanin-maut?
Wha will tell me how to ca't?
The rantin dog the daddie o't.

When I mount the creepie-chair,
Wha will sit beside me there?
Gie me Rob, I seek nae mair,
The rantin dog the daddie o't.

Wha will crack to me my lane?
Wha will mak me fidgin fain?
Wha will kiss me o'er again?
The rantin dog the daddie o't.

* See Vol. IV., p. 339,

† See Vol. I., p. 212.

THE SHEPHERD'S PREFERENCE.

'This song is Blacklock's. I don't know how it came by the name, but the oldest appellation of the air, was, 'Whistle and I'll come to you my lad.'

It has little affinity to the tune commonly known by that name.

THE BONIE BANKS OF AYR.*

I composed this song as I convoyed my chest so far on the road to Greenock, where I was to embark in a few days for Jamaica.

I meant it as my farewel Dirge to my native land.

JOHN O' BADENYOND.

This excellent song is the composition of my worthy friend, old Skinner, at Linshart.

A WAUKRIFE MINNIE.

I picked up this old song and tune from a country girl in Nithsdale.— I never met with it elsewhere in Scotland.

Whare are you gaun, my bonie lass,
 Whare are you gaun, my hinnie?
 She answer'd me right saucilie,
 An errand for my minnie.

O whare live ye, my bonie lass,
 O whare live ye, my hinnie?
 By yon burn-side, gin ye maun ken,
 In a wee house wi' my minnie.

But I foor up the glen at e'en,
 To see my bonie lassie;
 And lang before the gray morn cam,
 She was na hauf sae saucie.

O weary fa' the waukrife cock,
 And the founmart lay his crawin!
 He wauken'd the auld wife frae her sleep,
 A wee blink or the dawin.

An angry wife I wat she raise,
 And o'er the bed she brought her;
 And wi' a mickle hazel rung
 She made her a weel-pay'd dochter.

* See Vol. I., p. 415.

O fare thee weel, my bonie lass !
 O fare thee weel, my hinnie !
 Thou art a gay and a bonie lass,
 But thou has a waukrife minnie.

TULLOCHGORUM.

['Come, gie's a sang,' Montgomery cried,
 'And lay your disputes all aside ;
 What signifies 't for folks to chide
 For what was done before them :
 Let Whig and Tory all agree,
 Whig and Tory, Whig and Tory,
 Whig and Tory all agree,
 To drop their Whig-mig-morum.
 Let Whig and Tory all agree
 To spend the night wi' mirth and glee,
 And cheerful sing alang wi' me,
 The reel o' Tullochgorum, &c.]

This, first of songs, is the master-piece of my old friend Skinner. He was passing the day, at the town of Cullen, I think it was,* in a friend's house whose name was Montgomery. Mrs Montgomery observing, *en passant*, that the beautiful reel of 'Tullochgorum' wanted words, she begged them of Mr Skinner, who gratified her wishes, and the wishes of every lover of Scottish song, in this most excellent ballad.

These particulars I had from the author's son, Bishop Skinner, at Aberdeen.

FOR A' THAT AND A' THAT.†

This song is mine, all except the chorus.

AULD LANG SYNE.‡

Ramsay here, as usual with him, has taken the idea of the song, and the first line, from the old fragment, which may be seen in the Museum, Vol. V.

WILLIE BREW'D A PECK O' MAUT.§

This air is Masterton's ; the song mine.—The occasion of it was this. Mr Wm. Nicol, of the High School, Edinburgh, during the autumn

* In reality, the town of Ellon, in Aberdeenshire.

† See Vol. I., pp. 241, 245 ; II., p. 33 ; IV., pp. 186, 196.

‡ See Vol. II., p. 392 ; IV., p. 47.

§ See Vol. III., p. 102.

vacation being at Moffat, honest Allan, who was at that time on a visit to Dalswinton, and I went to pay Nicol a visit.—We had such a joyous meeting that Mr Masterton and I agreed, each in our own way, that we should celebrate the business.

KILLIECRANKIE.

The battle of Killiecrankie was the last stand made by the clans for James, after his abdication. Here the gallant Lord Dundee fell in the moment of victory, and with him fell the hopes of the party.—General M'Kay, when he found the Highlanders did not pursue his flying army, said, 'Dundee must be killed, or he never would have overlooked this advantage.'—A great stone marks the spot where Dundee fell.

THE EWIE WI' THE CROOKED HORN.

Another excellent song of old Skinner's.

CRAIGIE-BURN WOOD.*

It is remarkable of this air, that it is the confine of that country where the greatest part of our Lowland music (so far as from the title, words, &c, we can localize it), has been composed. From Craigie-burn, near Moffat, until one reaches the West Highlands, we have scarcely one slow air of any antiquity.

The song was composed on a passion which a Mr Gillespie, a particular friend of mine, had for a Miss Lorimer, afterwards a Mrs Whelpdale. The young lady was born at Craigie-burn-wood.—The chorus is part of an old foolish ballad.

FRAE THE FRIENDS AND LAND I LOVE†

I added the four last lines by way of giving a turn to the theme of the poem, such as it is.

HUGHIE GRAHAM.

These are several editions of this ballad.—This, here inserted, is from oral tradition in Ayrshire, where, when I was a boy, it was a popular song.—It, originally, had a simple old tune, which I have forgotten.

Our lords are to the mountains gane,
A hunting o' the fallow deer,
And they have gripet Hughie Graham,
For stealing o' the bishop's mare.

* See Vol. III., pp. 332, 333.

† See Vol. III., p. 334.

And they have tied him hand and foot,
And led him up thro' Stirling town ;
The lads and lasses met him there,
Cried, Hughie Graham thou'rt a loun.

O lowse my right hand free, he says,
And put my braid sword in the same ;
He's no in Stirling town this day,
Dare tell the tale to Hughie Graham.

Up then bespake the brave Whitefoord,
As he sat by the bishop's knee,
Five hundred white stots I'll gie you,
If ye'll let Hughie Graham free.

O haud your tongue, the bishop says,
And wi' your pleading let me be ;
For tho' ten Grahams were in his coat,
Hughie Graham this day shall die.

Up then bespake the fair Whitefoord,
As she sat by the bishop's knee ;
Five hundred white pence I'll gie you,
If ye'll gie Hughie Graham to me.

O haud your tongue now lady fair,
And wi' your pleading let it be ;
Altho' ten Grahams were in his coat,
It's for my honor he maun die.

They've ta'en him to the gallows knowe,
He looked to the gallows tree,
Yet never colour left his cheek,
Nor ever did he blink his e'e.

At length he looked round about,
To see whatever he could spy ;
And there he saw his auld father,
And he was weeping bitterly.

O haud your tongue, my father dear,
And wi' your weeping let it be ;
Thy weeping's sairer on my heart,
Than a' that they can do to me.

And ye may gie my brother John,
My sword that's bent in the middle clear.
And let him come at twelve o'clock,
And see me pay the bishop's mare.

And ye may gie my brother James
My sword that's bent in the middle brown,
And bid him come at four o'clock,
And see his brother Hugh cut down.

Remember me to Maggy, my wife,
 The neist time ye gang o'er the moor ;
 Tell her she staw the bishop's mare,
 Tell her she was the bishop's whore.

And ye may tell my kith and kin
 I never did disgrace their blood ;
 And when they meet the bishop's cloak
 To mak it shorter by the hood.

A SOUTHLAND JENNY.

[A Southland Jenny that was right bonny,
 She had for a suitor a Norlan' Johnnie ;
 But he was sicken a bashfu' wooer,
 That he could scarcely speak unto her.
 But blinks o' her beauty, and hopes o' her siller,
 Forced him at last to tell his mind till 'er ;
 'My dear,' quo' he, 'we'll nae langer tarry ;
 Gin ye can love me, let's o'er the muir and marry,' &c.]

This is a popular Ayrshire song, though the notes were never taken down before. It, as well as many of the ballad tunes in this collection, was written from Mrs Burns's voice.

MY TOCHER'S THE JEWEL.

This tune is claimed by Nathaniel Gow. It is notoriously taken from 'The Muckin' o' Geordie's Byre.' It is also to be found, long prior to Nathaniel Gow's æra, in Aird's Selection of Airs and Marches, the first edition, under the name of, 'The Highway to Edinburgh.'

THEN GUDE WIFE COUNT THE LAWIN.*

The chorus of this is part of an old song, one stanza of which I recollect.

Every day my wife tells me
 That ale and brandy will ruin me ;
 But if guid liquor be my dead,
 This shall be written on my head.
 O guide wife count, &c.

THERE'LL NEVER BE PEACE TILL JAMIE COMES HAME.†

This tune is sometimes called, 'There's few gude Fellows when Willie's awa.' But I never have been able to meet with any thing else of the song than the title.

* See Vol. IV., p. 346.

† See Vol. III., p. 241.

I DO CONFESS THOU ART SAE FAIR.*

This song is altered from a poem by Sir Robert Ayton, private secretary to Mary and Anne, queens of Scotland. The poem is to be found in James Watson's Collection of Scots Poems, I think that I have improved the simplicity of the sentiments, by giving them a Scots dress.

THE SOGER LADDIE.

The first verse of this is old; the rest is by Ramsay. The tune seems to be the same with a slow air, called 'Jacky Hume's Lament,' or, 'The Hollin Buss,' or, 'Ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?'

WHERE WAD BONIE ANNIE LIE.

The old name of this tune is, 'Whare'll our Gudeman lie.' A silly old stanza of it runs thus:

O whare'll our gudeman lie,
 Gudeman lie, gudeman lie,
 O whare'll our gudeman lie,
 Till he shute o'er the simmer?

Up amang the hen-bawks,
 The hen-bawks, the hen-bawks,
 Up amang the hen-bawks,
 Among the rotten timmer.

GALLOWAY TAM.

I have seen an interlude (acted at a wedding) to this tune, called 'The Wooing of the Maiden.' These entertainments are now much worn out in this part of Scotland. Two are still retained in Nithsdale, viz., 'Jilly Pure Auld Glenae,' and this one, 'The Wooing of the Maiden.'

AS I CAM DOWN BY YON CASTLE WALL.

This is a very popular Ayrshire song.

LORD RONALD MY SON.

This air, a very favorite one in Ayrshire, is evidently the original of Lochaber. In this manner, most of our finest more modern airs have had their origin. Some early minstrel, or musical shepherd, composed

* See Vol. III., p. 337.

the simple artless, original air; which being picked up by the more learned musician, took the improved form it bears.

O'ER THE MOOR AMANG THE HEATHER.

[Coming through the craigs o' Kyle,
Among the bonny blooming heather,
There I met a bonny lassie,
Keeping a' her yowes thegither.
O'er the moor amang the heather,
O'er the moor amang the heather,
There I met a bonny lassie,
Keeping a' her yowes thegither, &c.]

This song is the composition of a Jean Glover, a girl who was not only a whore, but also a thief; and in one or other character has visited most of the Correction Houses in the west. She was born, I believe, in Kilmarnock. I took the song down from her singing as she was strolling through the country, with a slight-of-hand blackguard.

TO THE ROSE BUD.

This song is the composition of a — Johnson, a joiner in the neighbourhood of Belfast. The tune is by Oswald, altered, evidently, from 'Jockie's Gray Breeks.'

YON WILD MOSSY MOUNTAINS.*

This tune is by Oswald. The song alludes to a part of my private history, which it is of no consequence to the world to know.

IT IS NA, JEAN, THY BONIE FACE.†

These were originally English verses :—I gave them their Scots dress.

EPPIE M'NAB.‡

The old song with this title, has more wit than decency.

WHIA IS THAT AT MY BOWER DOOR?§

This tune is also known by the name of, 'Lass an I come near thee.' The words are mine.

* See Vol. III., p. 338.

† See Vol. IV., p. 347.

‡ See Vol. IV., p. 342.

§ See Vol. IV., p. 342.

THOU ART GANE AWAY.

This tune is the same with 'Haud awa frae me, Donald.'

THE TEARS I SHED MUST EVER FALL.

This song of genius was composed by a Miss Cranston.* It wanted four lines to make all the stanzas suit the music, which I added, and are the first four of the last stanza.

No cold reproach, no altered mien,
 Just what would make suspicion start ;
 No pause the dire extremes between,
 He made me blest—and broke my heart !

THE BONIE WEE THING.†

Composed on my little idol, 'The charming, lovely Davies.'

THE TITHER MORN.‡

This tune is originally from the Highlands.—I have heard a Gaelic song to it, which I was told was very clever, but not by any means a lady's song.

A MOTHER'S LAMENT FOR THE DEATH OF HER SON.§

This most beautiful tune is, I think, the happiest composition of that bard-born genius, John Riddle, of the family of Glencarnock, at Ayr.—The words were composed to commemorate the much lamented, and premature death of James Ferguson, Esq., jun. of Craigdarroch.

DAINTIE DAVIE.||

This song, tradition says, and the composition itself confirms it, was composed on the Rev. David Williamson's begetting the daughter of Lady Cherrytrees with child, while a party of dragoons were searching her house to apprehend him for being an adherent to the solemn league

* Afterwards Mrs Dugald Stewart.

† See Vol. IV., p. 343.

|| See Vol. IV., p. 33.

‡ See Vol. III., p. 282.

§ See Vol. II., p. 379.

and covenant. The pious woman had put a lady's night-cap on him, and had laid him a-bed with her own daughter, and passed him to the soldiery as a lady, her daughter's bed-fellow.—A mutilated stanza or two are to be found in Herd's collection, but the original song consists of five or six stanzas, and were their delicacy equal to their wit and humor, they would merit a place in any collection.—The first stanza is,—

Being pursued by the dragoons,
Within my bed he was laid down ;
And weel I wat he was worth his room,
For he was my daintie Davie.

Ramsay's song, 'Luckie Nansie,' though he calls it an old song with additions, seems to be all his own, except the chorus ;

I was a telling you,
Lucky Nansie, luckie Nansie,
Auld springs wad ding the new,
But ye wad never trow me—

which I should conjecture to be part of a song, prior to the affair of Williamson.

THE BOB O' DUMBLANE.


Ramsay, as usual, has modernized this song. The original, which I learned on the spot, from my old hostess in the principal inn there, is—

Lassie, lend me your braw hemp heckle,
And I'll lend you my thrippin-kame ;
My heckle is broken, it canna be gotten,
And we'll gae dance the bob o' Dumblane, &c.

I insert this song to introduce the following anecdote, which I have heard well authenticated:—In the evening of the day of the battle of Dunblane (Sheriff-muir) when the action was over, a Scots officer in Argyle's army, observed to his Grace, that he was afraid the rebels would give out to the world that *they* had gotten the victory. 'Weel, weel,' answered his Grace, alluding to the foregoing ballad, 'if they think it be nae well bobbit, we'll bob it again.'

THE CHARACTER AND GENIUS OF BURNS.

I.

N forming an estimate of the character of Burns, the period of his life selected for judgment is of prime importance. To take an opinion of him from his hot youth would be as misleading as to have judged King Henry V. by the 'promise of his greener days.' We must fix on the stage of his career when he set himself to the working out of a deliberate plan of life. Such a stage was reached when Burns resolved to make Jean Armour his wife, if she were not so already in law, or to avow her publicly as such if she were. This was the most important step he had hitherto taken in life, and it was not taken without considerable inner conflict. There was the Clarinda entanglement, melodramatic in many aspects, but involving serious elements as well. There were other domestic possibilities and dreams, counselling delay. It was a difficult and undesirable situation, for which Burns, with his usual unsparing self-judgment, severely blamed himself. But, as matters stood, the right thing for him to do was to marry Jean.

He did so, and reaped the usual fruits of right-doing. His marriage put him at peace with himself in an unspeakably important sphere of feeling. It brought him a positive and valuable element of happiness. Some of Burns's critics have inferred from one or two angry or not quite respectful allusions to Jean in letters, to Clarinda among others, that he must have been haunted during his married life by the thought that he might have done better. There is no evidence of this otherwise; on the contrary, all the evidence is to the contrary effect. Burns knew—no man better—that it is impossible to improve upon the ethically right, and the casual expressions in question were either transient outbreaks of incidental displeasure, or touches of the amatory art brought into play by the Clarinda episode. The same critics have found in the

allegation that Jean had an earlier attachment a further *à priori* proof that the Burns marriage was an unhappy one. This inference, even if it were based on verified facts—which it is not—does not show much knowledge of the world or of human nature. Such things happen in romance, not in real life, and among sensible people, which Burns and his wife undoubtedly were.

Burns's marriage was unquestionably a blessing to him. To his family he was intensely devoted; he even went so far as to describe making 'a happy fireside clime for weans and wife' as 'the true pathos and sublime of human life.' This is strong, but it was not Burns's way to feel or say things by halves, and he generally meant the most of what he said. That he was a good husband and a good father will not be questioned by any except those who contend that there can be no excellence but in faultless perfection. His wife, who was in every sense the true judge, was always his warmest defender; and she had good reason. She began life a dowerless and illiterate country girl. Through her relation with Burns she ended it in comfort, a woman of comparative refinement and quiet dignity that gained her general respect. The sons of Burns, too, had just cause to be thankful for their father, not only because his fame gave them position and won them friends, but also because his early care for their education and training gave them motives and habits that carried them high in honourable careers. That Burns got back as good as he gave is merely to restate the tritest of moral truisms. His eight years of family duty made him, as a matter of course, a better man.

II.

Taking the married portion of his life, then, as the only true and just measure of Burns the man and poet, we have yet one or two qualifications to make. For one thing, in judging of any higher work which he aspired to do, or ought to have done, we cannot take into account the period—about a year—during which he was prostrated by bereavement and illness, and had begun to fear that the hand of death was upon him. We really must not 'sweat' our great men. We must give them time to dry their natural tears and recover their health, and if they see death coming, we must give them a few moments to prepare.

Besides, although it might be by fits and starts, Burns did work up to the last, and in this, as in other respects, he bore himself in the supreme emergency of fate with the calm dignity proper to the great man he was. His anxieties about his family—although he could hardly have a rational fear that they would be neglected—and the irritated, if groundless, alarm at the prospective degradation of imprisonment for debt which embittered his last and weakest moments, only enhance the admiration due to the finer elements of his character.

Then it should never be forgotten that Burns died at thirty-seven, after a life mainly occupied in severe physical toil. His destiny did not give him a fair chance of working out his ideals, ethical or poetical. What would most men have to show in the way either of virtue or of achievement if it was the rule to be cut off at thirty-seven? How many men of genius have done half as much of the kind of service Burns performed before they were thirty-seven? In how many men, great or undistinguished, has the conquest of evil been effected before that age?

Besides, we must remember that Burns was a man of the most powerful, penetrating, and original understanding, with an imagination and sensibility on an equal scale. Such a man would not, rather could not, be content with the traditional views of destiny and duty. He would attack the problem of the Universe and its mystery for himself. Not an article of religion, not a principle of morals, but he would investigate it to its foundations, and demand its why and its wherefore. As he tells us himself, he 'ventured' on 'the daring path Spinoza trod.' And if he saw more clearly and deeply than the average man, he also felt more keenly and desired more vehemently what he saw. Burns, as some one has well said, had ten or twelve times, probably twenty times, the ordinary man's sense and desire, say, of beauty. Let us think what that involves. Probably most of us know enough of what hunger means to understand what we should be like at the close of a two days' fast. Imagine that sensation twenty times as strong: should we be safe neighbours for a baker's shop? But Burns cannot be fairly judged unless by a test specially adapted to an artistic temperament of the intensest kind.

In the light of such general reflections, let us consider the nature of the life-plan which Burns formed at the date selected,

and how he carried it out within the time allowed him by fate. It was the plan not only of a right but of a great life. Burns determined to live for duty and for poetry. He would set up a home, and install Jean as its mistress. He would support himself and his family by farming or, alternatively, if combination of the two were impossible, by gauging; and he would try to rise officially that he might secure the largest attainable leisure for poetry. To the commonplace person this may not perhaps look much of a plan. To him, living for poetry naturally seems a species of lunacy. Then Jean was not a fine lady like Clarinda or the divine Burnett, and gauging was looked down upon by superior people. These, however, are exactly the reasons that made Burns's plan admirable. His head had not been turned a hairsbreadth by his meteoric success in Edinburgh. He had quietly made up his mind to being lionised and forgotten, except by two or three men whom he really respected, Dugald Stewart, Bishop Geddes, Graham of Fintry, Moore, Blacklock, Dunbar, Cunningham, and a few more who did not forget him, and whom he did not forget. Certain critics have said he was mortified because, on his return to Edinburgh, he did not have a second season of triumph. There is no evidence of any such feeling, but very much to show that he expected what happened, and did not care. He looked the facts of the situation fairly in the face, and, finding them morally imperative and socially humbling, he squared his arrangements accordingly.

III.

Let it be distinctly understood that Burns's first object was the moral reconstruction of his career. Writing to Bishop Geddes some time after his marriage, and explaining the step he had taken, he speaks of 'that first concern, the conduct of the man;' and, connecting his marriage with that first concern, he says, 'there was ever but one side on which I was habitually blamable, and there I have secured myself in the way pointed out by nature and nature's God.' The 'alternative' to marriage was, in his view, 'being at eternal warfare with myself, on account of habitual follies, to give them no worse name, which no general example, no licentious wit, no sophistical infidelity, would to me ever

justify.' In such circumstances he was convinced that he 'must have been a fool to have hesitated, and a madman to have made another choice.' But having made up his mind that 'the conduct of the man' was the 'first concern,' he found that, in his case, it demanded not only marriage, but marriage with a specific person. 'I had in my "Jean" a long and much-loved fellow-creature's happiness or misery among my hands; and who could trifle with such a deposit?'

Burns's severer critics have maintained that he had no genuine and abiding passion for Jean, and they trace what they term his 'ruin' in part to his having become recklessly and wrongly entangled with her in early days, and found himself unable to get out of the coil afterwards. He apologises, they say, to his friends for having married her, doing his best to cry up her attractions as a defence for having taken a false and humiliating step, and then they proceed to state that, finding nothing to keep him at home, he went out, and went to the bad. All this is pure fancy, and not very brilliant or ingenious fancy. Without doubt Burns's love for Jean Armour was deep and lasting. When she deserted him and consented to the destruction of the marriage 'lines,' amidst all his disappointment and anger, he declared that his heart was still hers. He meant what he said when he described Jean as 'the lass that I lo'e best.' When informing his correspondents of his marriage, intended or achieved, he speaks of her as 'long and much-loved,' and records his 'deep-rooted attachment.' If he speaks of her charms, it is as the lover boring his friends with his amorous sentiments. He says of her to Miss Chalmers, 'she has (oh, the partial lover! you will cry) the finest "wood-note wild" I ever heard.' The Anne Park incident was perhaps the most lamentable in Burns's history; but, at least, it showed that 'Jean's' was a character worthy even of the admiration of Burns, and well fitted to command and retain his affection. To an explanation already offered of certain of his expressions about Jean, which have been much made of by his detractors, it may be added that, when he wrote the worst of them, he was, perhaps, for some reason or another, not entirely himself, certainly not his best self. Burns was, by all accounts, perfectly happy at home, reading some new volume, acting as tutor to his children, making up his excise

accounts, finishing 'Auld Lang Syne,' 'Scots wha ha'e,' 'John Anderson,' or 'Duncan Gray,' and trying the effect of them through 'Jean's' 'wood-note wild.'

Anything that may seem apologetic in Burns's tone with respect to his marriage is due to a simple enough reason. From his letters to Bishop Geddes, Mrs Dunlop, and others, it would seem that some of his friends had been thinking, some even saying, that bachelorhood would be less burdensome and bring him more friends than marriage, especially so humble a marriage as that which made 'Jean' his wife, and Burns wanted to point out to Mr or Mrs Worldly Wiseman that duty and domestic happiness were higher things than mere 'getting on,' and that if Jean was not strong in social influences she had personal qualities which, to his mind, formed no inconsiderable compensation. It is, perhaps, not much to the purpose that Burns was all the time actually the husband of Jean, according to Scotch law. The destruction of the 'lines,' according to the majority of legal authorities at all events, could not annul the union of which they were merely the evidence. But Burns did not know that. 'Daddy Auld' had persuaded him to do kirk penance by representing that he would thereby be restored to bachelorhood. In marrying Jean, therefore, as he imagined *de novo*, Burns acted with the consciousness of a free man, desirous of rectifying his life by doing justice at once to his own affections and the claims of another. Whatever the past might have been, he had now put himself right.

IV.

The question then arose, of course, of ways and means to carry on this reorganised career, involving as it did the maintenance of home and family ; and not only that, but the sustenance also of the poetic function. There is involved in that question another, namely, whether Burns was well treated by his country in being left to fight out his life-battle as best he could and, at the same time, discharge his duty as its poet and instructor. It does seem the extravagance of patriotism to contend that everything was done for Burns that should or could have been done. Some one was certainly to blame when, in days of abundant patronage and sinecure, such a man was not placed in

some position where leisure could have been secured to him for the due development of his immense and peculiar gifts. That, however, is less a question for the friends of Burns than for those who justify the negligence or ingratitude of the day. Burns himself never stooped to think of reward in connection with the splendid service which he nevertheless knew he was rendering to his country and to humanity. At times a bitter thought might cross his mind—strange if it had not—but it was quickly swallowed up in his love of independence and his devotion to his art for its own sake.

These sentiments, however, greatly circumscribed the area within which Burns could provide the means of working out his plan of life. It is certain that he could have made money by writing, but he would not write for money. On this point there has been considerable misunderstanding. The fact is dwelt on that he had no hesitation in taking and even pressing for the profits of his published poems; and Lockhart quotes his remark to the Rev. Peter Carfrae in a letter about a verse-writer called Mylne, that ‘the profits of the labours of a man of genius are, I hope, as honourable as any profits whatever.’ But, in both cases, it must be observed that the work had been done before profits were thought of. There was no writing for money; there was only money after writing; and the distinction is vital to the question.

Some rhyme a neebour's name to lash;
 Some rhyme (vain thought) for needfu' cash;
 Some rhyme to court the country clash,
 And raise a din;
 For me, an aim I never fash—
 I rhyme for fun.

That is Burns's own account of the matter. He ‘rhymes for fun’—he writes, that is, for the pleasure of it. If, by some unexpected eventuality, profits subsequently arise, where else can they rightly go but to the writer? Repeatedly, and often in indignant language, he repudiates a mercenary motive in writing. ‘Rhyming for needfu' cash’ he declares to be a ‘vain thought,’ probably because, in his opinion, it would produce an artificial and false state of things. There is more in this sentiment than is generally allowed by professional writers. Is it not the fact that

real inspirations of truth and beauty can only come spontaneously in minds that are capable of them? They cannot be bought. What the buyer gets is not what he wants. He wants inspiration, and he gets desperation. It seems a kind of intellectual simony, an attempt to purchase, not perhaps a holy spirit, but a spirit akin to it. 'Thy money perish with thee' is the poetic, as well as the apostolic, denunciation of such traffic.

These may be counsels of perfection, yet there can be little doubt that the 'pot-boiler' exerts a vitiating influence throughout the whole sphere of creative intellectual activity. The preacher's homily, the lawyer's advocacy, the painter's canvas, the poet's song, the writer's tale, the editor's indignation, are probably all marred in excellence and diminished in power because they are made to order like coats and boots, because they do not bubble up of themselves out of crystal depths, but are pumped up out of the nearest mudhole at so much an hour for working the handle. Burns fabricated no 'pot-boilers.' He determined that not the spirit of the hireling, but only the spirit of nature that was in him, should speak through him. What he said, came—it was not fetched: hence it had the best chance to be genuine and true. Surely it is a noble and romantic spectacle, this of a poor man sacrificing certain gain that he might discharge, in purity and power, the high function of a world's teacher.

V.

Chances of advantage were barred to Burns in another direction by his keen spirit of independence. Burns spoke and wrote not a little about independence, and for much that he so spoke and wrote he has been blamed. But in this connection two or three things ought to be remembered. Burns was born in a situation in life where 'the proud man's contumely' is extensively felt and peculiarly galling, and he had powers of expression beyond most who occupy that situation. If to this we add that language does not appear to have been given to Burns, as to some, to conceal thought, we need not be surprised that he lauded independence much and highly, and asserted it in his own person habitually, perhaps, at times aggressively or unnecessarily. But was he wrong in the main? For what does he value that 'Rock of Independence' which

Carlyle unfavourably designates 'an air-castle after all, that looks well at a distance but will screen no one from real wind and wet'? As he states in the letter to 'lovely Davies,' where the phrase occurs, it is because it enables the meritorious whose 'hearts have been wounded by the scorn of the proud, whom accident has placed above them—or worse still, in whose hands are, perhaps, placed many of the comforts of their lives, to look justly down on their littleness of soul; to make the worthless tremble under their indignation, and the foolish sink before their contempt; and largely to impart that happiness to others, which will give themselves so much pleasure to bestow.' Surely this is a proper enough sentiment, which, a year before he died, he condensed in the 'Inscription for an Altar to Independence:'

Thou of an independent mind,
 With soul resolved, with soul resigned;
 Prepared Power's proudest frown to brave,
 Who wilt not be, nor have a slave;
 Virtue alone who dost revere,
 Thy own reproach alone dost fear,
 Approach this shrine, and worship here.

While, however, Burns rejoiced in self-assertion against the proud, the masterful, the worthless, and the foolish, he did not commit the sin against human brotherhood of cherishing a like sentiment towards the generous and the wise, however far above him in fortune. To say nothing of the 'Lament for Glencairn,' take his words to Mrs Graham of Fintry: 'Whatever might be my failings, for failings are a part of human nature, may they ever be those of a generous heart, and an independent mind. It is no fault of mine that I was born to dependence; nor is it Mr Graham's chiefest praise that he can command influence; but it is his merit to bestow, not only with the kindness of a brother, but with the politeness of a gentleman; and I trust it shall be mine to receive with thankfulness, and remember with undiminished gratitude.' This is not the language of an indiscriminating and envious leveller. Personally, Burns was not embittered by the inequalities of fortune. As a poet and an idealist he, of course, condemned them; but when it came to practical reality he took a different tone. Writing to Ainslie after he had begun gauging, he says: 'You need not doubt that

I find several very unpleasant and disagreeable circumstances in my business ; but I am tired with and disgusted at the language of complaint against the evils of life. . . . So far from being dissatisfied with my present lot, I earnestly pray the Great Disposer of events that it may never be worse, and I think I can lay my hand on my heart and say, "I shall be content ;" and to Tait : 'Every situation has its share of the cares and pains of life, and my situation I am persuaded has a full ordinary allowance of its pleasures and enjoyments.' 'Contented wi' little,' written less than two years before his death, was meant by him for a 'picture of his mind.'

But however admirable in itself Burns's independent spirit may have been, it was not calculated to smooth his way to independent circumstances. It very nearly cost him his post in the Excise, the administrators of which appear to have been of opinion that the proper function of such a man as Burns was 'not to think.' And they were by no means alone in that opinion. The proud, the masterful, the worthless and the foolish have often a considerable influence in distributing the prizes of life, and a poor man who insists on telling them his opinion of them is not likely to receive much assistance from them. Burns's fearlessness of speech undoubtedly made him many enemies, and even friendly critics have deplored his 'imprudence' in this respect. Burns did not reckon prudence among the highest virtues, if indeed he counted it a virtue at all. In judging him in this particular, we must consider whether he did better in thinking more of his public function than his personal interests, and surely it is not for us who have profited by his 'imprudence' to make it matter of accusation. Still it did not help him to competence, and, even among those whom Burns respected, it probably did him harm. They knew that to secure this independence of thought and speech he considered it essential to be self-reliant ; and, without appeal from himself, they might hesitate to offer help that might have been spurned. In these ways Burns's means of securing a livelihood were narrowed down very much to such productive industry as he had learned in his youth. He could not afford to acquire a profession, even if it had suited him. He knew something about farming. He secured an excise nomination and learned to gauge. Nothing else seemed feasible ; and so he resolved to try

farming, and, if that failed him, the Excise. The selection was as sensible as the determination to live by his own honest labour was honourable.

VI.

‘The heart of the man and the fancy of the poet are the two grand considerations for which I live,’ wrote Burns to Mrs Dunlop some years before that rather too much belauded *précieuse* had thrown him over. His plan of life had now done justice to ‘the heart of the man’ by providing for a marriage that was morally binding, and a bread-winning vocation to meet its claims. Subject to this, ‘the fancy of the poet’ commanded his powers and opportunities. Burns has been blamed because he did not make poetry the ‘lode-star’ of his life. There is really no truth in the charge. Early in life he determined, if a choice were necessary, to prefer poetry to wealth. In his twenty-seventh year he wrote to James Smith :

My pen I here fling to the door,
And kneel ‘Ye Powers’ and warm implore
Though I should wander Terra o’er
 In all her climes,
Grant me but this, I ask no more,
 Aye rowth o’ rhymes.

Gie dreeping roasts to country lairds,
Till icicles hing frae their beards ;
Gie fine braw claes to fine life-guards
 And maids of honour !
And yill and whisky gie to cairds
 Until they sconner.

A title, Dempster merits it ;
A garter gie to Willie Pitt ;
Gie wealth to some be-ledgered cit,
 In cent. per cent.
But give me real, sterling wit,
 And I ’m content.

While ye are pleased to keep me hale,
I ’ll sit down o’er my scanty meal,
Be ’t water-brose, or muslin-kail,
 Wi’ cheerfu’ face,
As lang ’s the Muses dinna fail
 To say the grace.

This was not juvenile and reckless enthusiasm. Burns was a man of strong common-sense, and had been seriously considering whether it was wise to devote himself to poetry and let fortune go. In 'The Vision' he says :

A' in this mottie, misty clime,
I backward mused on wasted time,
How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
 And done nae thing,
But stringin' blethers up in rhyme
 For fools to sing.

Had I to guid advice but harket,
I might, by this, have led a market,
Or strutted in a bank, and clarket
 My cash-account :
While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarket,
 Is a' the amount.

I started, muttering, blockhead ! coof !
And heaved on high my waukit loof,
To swear by a' yon starry roof,
 Or some rash aith,
That I henceforth would be rhyme-proof,
 Till my last breath.

Few will be sorry that Burns was not as good as his word or oath. The world would have lost a great poet and gained at most a small capitalist, if it would have gained even that. Burns was not cut out for making money. For one thing he had not that powerful hunger for material possession, that keen cupidity which is the essential motive for the accumulator's activity. His tastes and powers led him in a totally different direction. He had neither the business disposition nor the business capacity. As he tells us himself : 'The only two openings by which I could enter the Temple of Fortune were the gate of niggardly economy or the path of little chicaning bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture I never could squeeze myself into it ; the last I always hated—there was contamination in the very entrance.' Accordingly, we find him in this same poem deciding against the sacrifice of poetry for gain, under the image of accepting the poetic wreath from the Genius of his Country, who says to him :

Thy tuneful flame still careful fan ;
Preserve the dignity of man,
 With soul erect ;
And trust, the universal plan
 Will all protect.

And wear thou this, she solemn said,
And bound the holly round my head :
The polished leaves, and berries red,
 Did rustling play ;
And like a passing thought, she fled
 In light away.

It must be remembered that this was not a theatrical performance by a shallow if imaginative man. Burns's understanding was as powerful as his fancy, and he knew himself, and what he was doing. He saw that what nature had fitted him for above all things was poetry, and he judged that in shaping his career it was best for him to do what he could do best. Surely a wise decision, which he never had reason or inclination to repent. After the first blaze of his fame was over, his letters are full of protestations of his determination to give his best thoughts to poetry. Thus, in the letter to Bishop Geddes already cited, he says, 'My characteristical trade is not forgotten ; I am, if possible, more than ever an enthusiast to the Muses. I am determined to study Man and Nature, and in that view incessantly to try if the ripening and corrections of years can enable me to produce something worth preserving. . . . You will see that I have been tuning my lyre on the banks of the Nith. . . . Some large poetic plans that are floating in my imagination or partly put in execution I shall impart to you when I have the pleasure of meeting you.' Five years later, when he had only two years to live, we find him writing to a friend of political influence, Heron of Kerroughtree—in whose interest he threw off, within a few weeks of his death, 'Buy braw troggin,' perhaps the keenest of his election ballads—'A life of literary leisure, with a decent competence, is the summit of my wishes ;' and he indicates his anxiety to be promoted to an Excise Collectorship on the ground that it would be 'a life of complete leisure,' whereas a Supervisorship is, as he puts it, 'an incessant drudgery, and would be nearly a complete bar to every species of literary pursuit.' But it is superfluous to multiply proofs of

Burns's deliberate and life-long self-dedication to poetry. The very collar of his dog was inscribed 'Robert Burns, Poet,' and his seal had a lark for its crest, a shepherd's pipe among its supports, and 'Woodnotes wild' for its motto.

There can be little doubt that Burns did right when he turned his back on money-making, and determined to give the best of himself to poetry. As it turned out, it was poetry that gave him any little prosperity he ever had, that raised him above absolute want, that gave him the hope and prospect of competence, that brought comfort and success to his family, to say nothing of the keen and unique intellectual and moral satisfactions which he must have enjoyed in exercising his true vocation, and 'preserving the dignity of man.' In such ecstatic experiences he would learn the real meaning of virtue being its own reward.

VII.

We come now to the important question—How did Burns work out the truly noble plan of life which he had laid down for himself? The earliest answer made to this question, under the authority of his first biographers, Heron, Currie, and, to a certain extent, Walker, was that he had entirely failed, through abandoning himself to alcoholic dissipation and its associated and resulting vices; that, for its sake, he had outraged his home, wrecked his business career, neglected poetry, and brought himself to indigence and an early death. That this black picture was believed to be the truth by many in the locality where his last years were spent cannot be denied, and although subsequent investigation has greatly toned down the dark colouring of the first sketch, there is still a widespread impression that Burns's was a case of moral and artistic breakdown. Were this true it would be lamentable indeed. But it is not. A fair examination of the available evidence leads to a totally different conclusion; the worst that can be truly said is Carlyle's affirmation that to the last 'the soul of Burns, though scathed and marred, was yet living in its full moral strength, though sharply conscious of its errors and abasement.' That is a very different matter from final ruin, suggesting only temporary and partial eclipse, from which time and effort might have brought deliverance.

When the facts are gone into, it is surprising how little of tangible incident can be got at, and how much hangs upon rumour and gossip. Heron is vague and malicious, and, besides being incapable of forming a right judgment of Burns, he is otherwise untrustworthy. Currie is a higher type of man and writer, but great caution must be used in accepting his statements of fact. His manipulation of the dates of Burns's letters to Mrs Dunlop, with the view of relieving her from the odium of her later neglect of the poet, would of itself be enough to cast doubt upon his reliability. Much has been said of communications alleged to have been made to Currie by Maxwell, the physician and friend of Burns, who attended him in his last as well as other illnesses, and a certain very ugly insinuation is supposed to have had Maxwell's authority. We have now no means of testing Currie's accuracy here. But he is curiously inaccurate in certain other particulars for testing which we happen to have such means. For example, he says, referring to Burns's last days : 'About the latter end of June he was advised to go into the country, and, impatient of medical advice, as well as of every species of control, he determined for himself to try the effects of bathing in the sea.' Currie probably believed that he was here stating facts on the authority of Maxwell. Yet his charge against Burns is absolutely false. Writing from Brow to Cunningham on the 7th July, Burns says, 'The medical folks tell me that my last and only chance is *bathing* and country quarters, and riding.' Three days later, writing to Armour, his father-in-law, he says, 'The medical people order me, *as I value my existence*, to fly to sea-bathing and country quarters.' Most people will believe Burns, but then what of Currie as a trustworthy narrator?

Currie will have it that in Dumfries Burns became a habitual drunkard, and drank even during business hours. 'His irregularities grew, by degrees, into habits. These temptations unhappily occurred during his engagements in the business of his office as well as during his hours of relaxation.' Currie adduces no specific instance, and, with proof before us that he breaks down when brought to book, we cannot rely upon sweeping statements gathered he does not say whence. On the other hand, there is distinct and responsible testimony that Burns was not what one of his recent critics rashly and roundly calls a 'toper.' Walker paid him a

surprise visit, by his own account, in November 1795, nine months before his death—Walker is generally believed to have erred as to the date of his visit, but the mistake is not material—and while criticising him freely enough in other respects in his amusingly patronising manner, admits that ‘he had discovered in his conduct no errors . . . sufficient to account for the mysterious insinuations which he had heard against his character. He [Burns] on this occasion drank freely without being intoxicated, a circumstance from which,’ continues Walker, ‘I concluded that he was not addicted to cordials; for if he had tasted liquor in the morning he must have easily yielded to the excess of the evening.’* It is evident that in some Dumfries circles a sort of sinister myth had grown up around Burns’s name, with a certain centre of reality in his political and personal peculiarities, but indebted, in the usual way, for its main bulk to the inventiveness of the busybody and the backbiter. In Dumfries, it must be remembered, political party feeling ran high. Burns, despite the order ‘not to think,’ thought and spoke and acted effectively. It need, accordingly, occasion no surprise that, after the manner of politicians, nothing could be too bad to be believed by his opponents about the author of the Election Ballads and ‘A man’s a man for a’ that.’

Findlater, his official superior, in emphatic opposition to Currie, after stating that as an exciseman ‘he was exemplary in his attention, and even jealous of the least imputation on his vigilance,’ says, ‘I will further avow that I never saw him—which was very frequently while he lived at Ellisland, and still more after he removed to Dumfries—but in hours of business he was quite himself and capable of discharging the duties of his office; nor was he ever known to drink by himself, or seen to indulge in the use of liquor in a forenoon.’ Gray, the clergyman and Academy master of Burns’s children, dwells on the persevering, unique, and

* Burns probably never gave pithier expression to his views on the subject of drinking than in the following note, suggested to him by a passage in a volume of Sterne which belonged to him, and is now the property of Mr W. Craibe Angus of Glasgow: ‘I love drinking now and then. It defecates the standing pool of thought. A man perpetually in the paroxysms and fevers of inebriety is like a half-drowned, stupid wretch condemned to labour unceasingly in water, but a now-and-then tribute to Bacchus is like the cold bath—bracing and invigorating.—R. B.’

Another note in the same volume is characteristic: ‘Golden locks are a sign of amorousness. The more love in a woman’s composition, the more soul she has.’

of course keenly-intelligent pains which Burns bestowed on their home tuition, and asks with much force 'if employments like these are consistent with *habitual drunkenness*.' Burns's widow may be thought too partial a witness, but she would scarcely have gone so far as to invent a statement that she had never known him return unable to shut up the house or undress unaided. She consistently maintained that the rumours against her husband were grossly exaggerated, a testimony which every candid observer of men and things will be ready enough to accept. But after all Burns is his own best witness. He knew the facts, as, of course, no one else could have known them. He was incapable of being blinded in his self-knowledge or partial in his self-judgment, and his speech and action are not consistent with the 'toper's' habit.

VIII.

Take the mere fact that Burns died perfectly solvent. Any trifle he owed or borrowed, under the unfortunate though fanciful alarms that made his last moments delirious, was more than amply covered by his assets, either actual or in the shape of creditor claims. But it might very easily have been otherwise. Burns's social position, although, through no fault of his, out of keeping, according to popular ideas, with his rank as a man of transcendent genius, was nevertheless above want, although not far above it, and necessitated every effort to make ends meet. But the ends were made to meet, and it was Burns himself, no doubt well seconded by his wife, who made them do so. Could this have happened had Burns been a drunkard? Even rich drunkards often bring themselves to ruin; poor ones very soon land in beggary. Had Burns abandoned himself to drink, he would have done it, as he did everything else, on a scale that would have left no doubt as to the nature of his procedure. He would have thrown possessions and prospects to the winds, and revelled in a short-lived if glorious Bacchanalianism. That he kept himself and his family respectably upon his limited pay, and owed no man anything, is ample proof that he was not the slave of alcohol that his accusers would make out. It may be said that he refrained from so wasting his means, partly from regard to his family and partly to preserve that position of independence which he prized so highly. Be it so:

the fact remains admitted that he must have substantially refrained from giving himself up to drink. There are other insinuations which do not bear a moment's examination. Wife and child were of uncontaminated health and constitution. How is that reconcilable with the more malign whisperings of his enemies?

Had Burns been conscious of having sacrificed his whole life-plan to drink and its concomitant degradations, he was too honest a man, both by nature and choice, to have faced the world and demanded its respect as he did. But there is nothing in his bearing to indicate any falling off in self-respect. He claims his place as usual in every situation where it is right for him to appear, and does not hang his head before the best or the 'greatest.' He does not blush among his fellow-excisemen, be it Collector Mitchell, Supervisor Findlater, or Supernumerary Stobie. He corresponds extensively, and always interestingly, often in language of great and genuine eloquence or marked by practical wisdom and profound thought, with all classes and conditions of men and women, Mrs Dunlop, Mrs Riddel, Lord Buchan, Graham of Fintry, Syme of Ryedale, Heron of Kerroughtree, Oswald of Auchincruive, M'Murdo of Drumlanrig, Provost Staig of Dumfries, Critic Tytler and Writer Cunningham of Edinburgh, Farmer Cleghorn of Saughton, Schoolmaster Clarke of Forfar, Song-collectors Johnson and Thomson of the *Museum* and *Melodies*, and many more; but nowhere is there the slightest trace of a sense that he is unworthy of their attention, respect, or intimacy. He performs his functions as a citizen, takes part in the parliamentary elections, joins the volunteers and becomes their poet-laureate, attends with regularity the meetings of his Masonic lodge, entirely as if there was nothing wrong. If there is any truth in the story, on which so much false sentiment has been wasted, about Burns walking the shady side of the street while the Dumfries gentry on the other side would not recognise him, it proves at all events that Burns knew no reason why he should not show himself on the street as well as the proudest among them.

Besides, we know exactly what Burns thought about himself on this head from his own explicit statements. In January of 1794, about the time usually selected for his final surrender to the drink-fiend, he wrote to the younger Samuel Clark: 'Some of our folks about the Excise Office, Edinburgh, had, and perhaps still

have, conceived a prejudice against me as being a drunken, dissipated character. I might be all this, you know, and yet be an honest fellow; but you know that I am an honest fellow, and am nothing of this. You may, in your own way, let him [i.e. Corbet, Supervisor-General] know that I am not unworthy of subscribing myself your friend.' In May 1794 we find him writing almost as explicitly in connection with the too famous Riddel quarrel, in which Burns was certainly more sinned against than sinning, although it was happily ended before a year was gone. He wished to get a volume of his own unpublished poems returned from the library of his estranged, and, by that time, deceased friend Riddel of Friars' Carse, and in a letter to Mrs Riddel's sister on the subject he said: 'The cutting reflection of all, that I had, most unfortunately, though most undeservedly, lost the confidence of that soul of worth, ere it took its flight! These, madam, are sensations of no ordinary anguish. However you also may be offended with some *imputed* improprieties of mine; sensibility you know I possess, and sincerity none will deny me. To oppose those prejudices which have been raised against me is not the business of this letter. Indeed, it is a warfare I know not how to wage. The powers of positive vice I can in some degree calculate, and against direct malevolence I can be on my guard; but who can estimate the fatuity of giddy caprice, or ward off the unthinking mischief of precipitate folly?'

IX.

It is plain that at this time Burns knew that there were people, as there are now, who thought that he had sacrificed his career to drink. Burns himself was manifestly not of that opinion, and the world, or that part of it that desires historical truth, will probably prefer his self-knowledge to any outside criticism. Not that there were no drinking bouts. His censors are entitled to this admission. Burns tells us of them, often in terms of anger, not only with himself, but with what he calls the 'savage hospitality' of the localities, the times, and the society in which he moved. It may be said that Burns ought to have struggled with and overcome this savage hospitality. He meant to do it and tried to do it in the maturer period which we are considering. To say that he

committed 'too many' excesses, and was therefore a moral failure, is to postulate that if he had committed only a few he would have been a moral success. That will not do. No man is allowed a certain minimum percentage of transgression. Tried by an objective standard, the differences between men are simply of degree. The saint and the pickpocket alike come short, although the one may fall somewhat farther behind than the other. It is strange that in a country like Scotland, nourished theologically for three centuries and a half on the doctrine of justification by faith alone, it should be so often forgotten that the right standard by which to judge a man is not the objective but the subjective standard, not by what he does but by what he is. The real difference between men is an inward one, and the true question to ask about any man is whether he is trying to do his best? Or has he ceased to try? Or is he even trying to do his worst? The external moral failures of a man may throw light on this question, but they certainly will not serve to settle it justly if no regard is had to the number and strength of his temptations. A man may be often overthrown, and yet he may be anxious and resolute to win the victory. Accordingly, if we want to get at the truth about Burns, assuming for a moment the accuracy of what his worst detractors say, we must consider the nature of his temptations, and whether their alleged numerous triumphs prove that he had ceased to fight with them, and had deliberately given them a loose rein.

Certainly on the points in which he is said to have failed Burns was tried in a way in which probably no man of his day was or could be. Take this very matter of the 'savage hospitality,' which Burns undoubtedly did desire and endeavour to overcome. It was the custom, and while custom is hard for any man to battle with, it must have been peculiarly so for a man like Burns with a perfect genius for conviviality. There may be danger, but there is neither criminality nor sin in conviviality. 'The feast of reason, and the flow of soul,' though hackneyed by quotation, is really a possibility, and often a fact; and when it is realised it has an unrivalled capacity for refreshing and stimulating the best qualities of human nature. Was Burns to wrap in a napkin and hide in the earth his splendid and unique talent of conversation? With his sympathies and powers it was impossible, and

would, in a sense, have been wrong, for Burns to remain in morose seclusion. Besides, in circumstances where both his emotional and his intellectual qualities received simultaneously their highest stimulus, he must often have got as good as he gave, receiving inspiration as well as giving delight, and many a great and bright thought must have entered his mind in society which would never have come to him in solitude. Moreover, as a poet and delineator of human nature, Burns was in his place wherever men were gathered together. Hence he might possibly, but quite legitimately, be found associating with persons whom the narrow if prudent respectability of Dumfries would have considered 'low,' or even 'very low.' But the author of the aphorism that 'the Rank is but the guinea stamp, the Man's the gold,' did not measure any man's standing in the 'genteel' or the bourgeois Dumfries way. Had he acted, in the spirit of exclusion instead of sympathy, on his own standard of 'high' and 'low,' he must have led the life of a hermit. There was not a man in Dumfries who was not miles below him in his own conception of true rank.

But if Burns was to be social and sympathetic, where was he to draw the line? How many windows must a man have had to his house before it would have been 'proper' for Burns to sympathise with him? Not all street porters are wise, and not all dukes are foolish; but Burns would have felt more respect for the wise street porter than for the foolish duke, and would have instinctively shunned the society of the one as a waste of time, and sought that of the other as an opportunity of bartering the delight he himself had to give for the inspiration of his brother-man's contact and the facts of human nature that were in him. Nay, would Burns's sympathy stop at the socially 'low,' or embrace even the ethically 'very low'? 'I have often coveted,' he had written down deliberately in his *Commonplace Book*, 'the acquaintance of that part of mankind commonly known by the ordinary phrase of BLACKGUARDS sometimes farther than was consistent with the safety of my character; those who by thoughtless prodigality, or headstrong passions have been driven to ruin; though disgraced by follies, nay sometimes "stain'd with guilt, and crimson'd o'er with crimes," I have yet found among them, in not a few instances, some of the noblest Virtues—Magnanimity,

Generosity, disinterested Friendship, and even Modesty—in the highest perfection.’ Burns clearly was reluctant to call any human being common or unclean. This, however, was naturally too much for average Dumfries, which complained that this man should receive sinners and eat with them. Whatever opinion may be held as to Burns’s explanation and defence of his sympathy with Bohemianism, it is evident that he himself did not think it wrong; and those at least who enjoy ‘The Jolly Beggars,’ and similar pictures, are bound to grant a dispensation to the thorough-going artist who must have gathered the materials of their delectation among the ‘very lowest’ of the ‘low.’

X.

Burns was thus impelled to sociality by extreme and altogether exceptional pressure. He was pressed from within by his own human sympathy and even by his poetic necessities. He was pressed from without by the demand of fellow-creatures of all degrees eager to have their own souls irradiated by his matchless gift of speech. Unluckily the liberal use of the bottle was a *sine qua non* of the conviviality of the times, and there was danger. But people who complained of Burns’s excesses should have remembered that they themselves were more luckily situated in being less tempted. Probably they did not want anybody’s society, and nobody wanted theirs. They were not entitled, therefore, to infer from Burns’s alleged excesses that he had given up the struggle with temptation and become a permanently and essentially vicious man, but only that he had more to fight against than themselves. Then Burns had peculiar difficulties of another kind to meet. For some of these heredity may be responsible. Possibly there may have been some tinge of alcoholic tendency in him derived from a far-off time. At all events there was that ten or twentyfold passion-power to which reference has already been made. Further, great genius though Burns was, he could not, as some of his more thoughtless patrons and superior critics seem to have expected, leave, at a bound, the manners and the morals of his peasant birth and station behind him, and start anew as a quasi-aristocrat or quasi-bourgeois. Indeed he knew better than attempt it; and to the last, while ‘preserving the dignity of

man' in any circle which he entered, and respecting the possessors of intellect and sensibility in any class of life, though despising those who had nothing in them but manners, he shrank from the worry of continually accommodating himself to aristocratic or middle-class conventionalities, and preferred—surely it was a wise and brave preference—to dwell mainly among his own people.

That is to say, the peasant consciousness never entirely left him, nor did he try to expel it. But the Scotch peasant consciousness had its peculiarities, one of them being that though drilled in all the orthodoxy of Calvinism it reserved a secret corner for the free naturalism of Bacchus and Venus; and that reservation was accordingly a special but inevitable element in the controlling impressions which Burns received from Destiny. Nor must we omit to notice the power of habits that had grown upon him in the wilder days before 'rantin' rovin' Robin' had settled down to the serious regulation of his life. Who among Burns's accusers ever had half the number and power of the varied elements of temptation to contend with that he had on this part of the moral battlefield? Accordingly, granting them the full tale of excesses over their own with which they charge him—although, as already shown, the actual evidence yields a different result—there is no proof *ab extra* of that abandonment of the struggle with evil which is essential to the existence of a vicious nature, whilst we have Burns's own distinct and repeated testimony that such was not the condition of his spirit. We have already seen his refusal to admit that he was a dissipated character, as alleged by scandal. To this must be added his own evidence as to the invincible perseverance with which, after every moral defeat, he returned to the struggle with the determination to be master next time. Perhaps it is sufficient to cite the last of these instances, from the rhymed Epistle to Collector Mitchell about the close of 1795:

Ye've heard this while how I've been licket,
And by fell death was nearly nicket;
Grim loon! he got me by the fecket,
And sair me sheuk;
But by guid luck I lap a wicket,
And turned a neuk.

But by that health, I've got a share o't,
And by that life, I'm promised mair o't,
My hale and weel I'll take a care o't,
A tentier way ;
Then farewell folly, hide and hair o't,
For aince and aye !

'Farewell folly'—not 'Evil, be thou my good.' It is at once a confession of wrong and a resolution to do better. There is not a saint in the calendar who, unless he had been canonised by mistake, did not say the same thing every day of his life. It is easy for the cynic to remind us of what became of the sick Devil's resolution to be a Monk, but he forgets that by the theological hypothesis devils are irreclaimable, while men are not. Nor is it to the point that within a week or two after the resolution in question, Burns, as is alleged, caught the fatal chill that brought him to his grave. The story of the Globe dinner reposes on doubtful and in any case conflicting evidence. At worst we must hold it not a transgression, but a miscalculation and an accident. How was Burns to foresee that he had to meet a night of exceptional cold? How can we decide why he went? But call it a lapse from the right. The battle between good and evil in the spirit of man involves tussles without number. The will may have to forgive itself for errors seventy times seven, and yet return to the charge as hopeful as at first. The true question is: Is there a genuine spirit of resistance in the man? Who can doubt that Burns loved and desired moral self-command? The man who really does so is subjectively virtuous, and will never cease the effort to realise his ideal. Currie says, 'his appetites and sensations, which could not pervert the dictates of his judgment, finally triumphed over all the powers of his will.' Did Currie know Burns's moral equipment better than Burns himself, who emphatically denies that it was what Currie so sweepingly affirms? 'Farewell folly,' said Burns, with the air of one who meant what he said, and who believed he could do what he meant; and from then up to the day of his death there is only one imperfectly authenticated and utterly unexplained instance of anything resembling 'folly' taking his will by surprise.

'This victory,' continues Currie, 'was not obtained without

many obstinate struggles, and at times temperance and virtue seemed to have obtained the mastery.' Out of Currie's own mouth, therefore, we have it that the right spirit was there. Currie was reared in a Scotch manse, and must have made acquaintance with the Calvinistic dogma of Perseverance, which might have suggested to him that when the right spirit is once in a man it cannot be finally extinguished. But we do not need to fly so high. The facts of human nature are sufficient. If habit of one kind is powerful for evil, habit of another kind is powerful for good. No doubt—by his own showing—the habit of external 'folly' had a strong hold on Burns, but—equally by his own and Currie's showing—the habit of inwardly resisting 'folly' was a part of him. Which of these would have ultimately conquered had Burns lived? Currie says Burns had a weak will. Carlyle says he had 'an iron resolution.' What Currie really meant was that Burns had abnormally strong passions, in relation to which even an 'iron resolution' might seem and be temporarily weak. But time was on the side of the 'iron resolution' and against the passions, and had Burns not been cut off accidentally, as it were—for we have no medical statement of any authority, or even at all, as to the possibilities of prolonged life that were in him—it is simply the correct psychological forecast that he would have attained the self-mastery at which he aimed.

XI.

Burns, then, did not die a moral bankrupt through drink and dissipation, as certain critics seem anxious to establish. He died a man fighting with his failings, and that is a spectacle reassuring to every observer of any moral insight and experience. He had not failed in any part of the life-plan he had laid down eight years before. Its execution might not be perfect—whose is? But he kept it resolutely before him as a guide in all departments of his activity—domestic, industrial, poetic. He did succeed in 'making a happy fireside clime to weans and wife.' Child and mother welcomed his returning footstep, for he was a light and a blessing to both. There was irregularity—not repeated irregularity—a dying survival from the time when the audacious spirit of his youth insisted on exploring all the penetralia of a universe that

was new ; but it was condoned in the only quarter where there were rights, and where he had himself already created a catholic wisdom and tenderness that appreciated his real value. Burns had sundry Platonic loves—Chloris, for instance, perhaps Maria Riddel, and others ; there is no reason to doubt that these were of the character he ascribed to them, and defended by him on principles which, though they were foreign to the kirk-session conception of life, would not appear strange to a tribunal of wider intelligence. Mrs Burns understood the point of view. Chloris was her guest, Mrs Riddel was her visitor.

Then as to his bread-winning occupation, by which he sought independence for family, personal dignity, and poetic vocation, there is no evidence of neglect, despair, or relaxed effort, but much of perseverance and success. His detractors maintain that Edinburgh was his Capua, that he became disgusted with work, and could never again apply himself to steady industry. Burns himself perfectly understood the situation. To Nicol he writes : ‘ My mind has been vitiated by idleness, and it will take a good deal of effort to habituate it to the routine of business ; ’ to Miss Chalmers, ‘ It will take a strong effort to bring my mind into the routine of business ; ’ to Dunbar, ‘ I am earnestly busy to bring about a revolution in my own mind. . . . My knowledge of business is to learn. . . . My late scenes of idleness and dissipation have enervated my mind to an alarming degree. Skill in the sober science of life is my most serious and hourly study.’ One advantage he had here. His early years of toil enabled him to know what work meant, and taught him not to be afraid of putting his neck into the collar. Nor was he. On what he had reason to think good advice, but which turned out to be bad, he took a farm, and set to work—not only superintending, but labouring with his own hands when necessary. Within six months he discovered that a mistake had been committed—that the farm was little more than the ‘ riddlings of creation.’ There is no proof that he was a bad or careless farmer. Critics, on *a priori* grounds, concluded that, being a poet, he must have been dreaming when he should have been ploughing, as if he had not learned long ago to reconcile the two occupations. Or they said that, being in request as a conversationalist, he must have been away setting lairds’ tables in a roar when he should have been watch-

ing his workpeople or attending to his harvest. But nobody produces any positive and credible proof of this inattention. On the contrary, to take one case, we know that when Lord Buchan put before him the temptation of a pressing invitation to pay a visit to Ednam and take part in the coronation of his favourite Thomson's bust, he declined on the ground that he must stay at home for harvesting. The farm was really a bad bargain. Burns might possibly have made something of it if he had recalled his loan to his brother and ruined the Ayrshire household, but he was not the man to think of any such thing. Accordingly, he tried to combine gauging and farming, making his excise salary pay the rent, and got quit of the farm as soon as he could. It was undoubtedly the most prudent course in the circumstances. 'Jean,' whom Currie acknowledges to have been a good manager, always denied that Burns failed as a farmer, and there is other evidence that he managed his land at least as well as his neighbours.

As to the gauging, it seems pretty clear that he must have effectually overcome the Edinburgh 'enervation,' because, although he did not like the profession, and knew it was looked down upon, he turned out an excellent exciseman, not only doing his routine work steadily and accurately, but making useful practical suggestions and reports to the town of Dumfries and his superiors, and recommending himself to the bench of justices by the tact and considerateness of his official action. It was only when death laid its hand upon him that he had—temporarily as he anticipated—to leave his duties unperformed. He has been blamed for delaying his promotion by the imprudent utterance of his political opinions, and it has been said that, having discovered what he had done, he became bitter and desperate, and let things drift. If it was imprudent, surely it was a noble imprudence. How could a man like Burns avoid having strong political convictions, especially in presence of such a portent as the French Revolution; and how, in Burns's position, and with his ideas, could he have been other than a democrat? It was hard for him to curb the veracity of his own nature. Yet for the sake of the paramount objects he had in view, he tried to repress his *sæva indignatio*; and it was only through chinks here and there, and now and then, that the steam broke out with a whistle or a roar

that betrayed the inner intensity. Does it reflect lustre on the name of Pitt if, believing that 'no verse since Shakespeare's had so much the appearance of coming sweetly from nature' as Burns's, when a proposal was made to place the poet in a position where he could give most of his time to poetry, he preferred to resent the democrat's politics, pushed the bottle to Dundas, and did nothing? Surely, as Sir Walter Scott says, it might have been remembered that 'it was Burns.' The real question, however, is, did Burns lose heart and fly to whisky? He did not. He never lost heart. In April 1793, it is true, we find him writing to Erskine of Mar, 'I understand that all hopes of my getting officially forward are blasted.' Time, however, wrought changes. A year afterwards, in May 1794, writing to the younger Miller about the *Morning Chronicle* proposal, he says: 'My prospect in the excise is something'—enough, seemingly, to warrant his declining the offer. In March 1795, as already noticed, writing to Heron of Kerroughtree, Whig candidate for the Stewartry, he discusses his excise prospects with much hopefulness, says he will soon be a supervisor, but desires a collectorship—which a political friend might help him to—because supervising is 'incessant drudgery,' and 'a life of literary leisure with a decent competence is the summit of my wishes.'

Up to within a few weeks of his death there can be little doubt that Burns was thinking of how his official promotion could be accelerated by political intervention. He has been blamed for taking part in electioneering. Without disparaging his political zeal, it should be remembered that Burns had a deep interest in the return of the Whigs to power. As early as February 1791, writing to Moore, of *Zeluco* fame, about, *inter alia*, the great loss he had sustained in the death of Glencairn, he says: 'Independent of my grateful attachment to him, which was indeed so strong that it pervaded my very soul, and was entwined with the thread of my existence; so soon as the Prince's friends had got in (and every dog, you know, has his day) my getting forward in the excise would have been an easier business than otherwise it will be.' In his letter of 1795 to Heron, already referred to, enclosing electioneering ballads, and promising other help, he says: 'It would be the prudish affectation of silly pride

in me to say that I do not need, or would not be indebted to, a political friend; at the same time, sir, I by no means lay my affairs before you thus to hook my dependent situation on your benevolence.' Next year, in May—he died in July—there was another election, and Burns, as already said, dashed off 'Buy braw troggin' in Heron's interest. Can any one doubt that in the enthusiasm of his efforts to secure a general Whig victory—in the possibility of which he, Heron, and many others are indeed known to have believed—there mingled the hope that he might all the earlier reach the coveted position that would enable him to do full justice to his family and his poetic vocation? His critics may now turn and say that there was as much of the serpent as of the dove in all this. Though it is not so, yet be it so. In that case, however, they must surrender the view that Burns had abandoned hope, become desperate and sought refuge in base delights. That view is as inconsistent with their own contention as it is ridiculously contrary to the recorded facts. As regards his business prospects, Burns was hopeful, even sanguine, and continually on the alert, to the last.

XII.

What has been said makes it easier to deal with the remaining division of Burns's plan of life, his self-dedication to poetry. His critics aver that like all else that was good, he gave this up too. The facts show that he was ceaselessly and hopefully working up to a position where he could carry out his plan on a worthy scale.

That placed by thee upon the wished-for height,
Where, man and nature fairer in her sight,
My Muse may imp her wing for some sublimer flight.

So he wrote to Graham of Fintry in 1788, and, as we have seen, he was in full pursuit of his aim when death interposed. His critics have remorselessly asked, Why did he not address himself to the 'sublimer flight' at once? Why did he not 'concentrate' himself, say, on the drama he spoke of, and produce half-a-dozen pages of MS. every day before breakfast or after he came home at night from his work? There have been persons called poets who did that, but somehow their laborious efforts are

forgotten, while 'Auld Lang Syne,' 'Ye banks and braes,' 'John Anderson,' 'Tam o' Shanter,' 'Mary in Heaven,' and many more of the like, are as living to-day as they were a hundred years ago. The inference would seem to be that Burns judged better than those who say that because his stationer's bill did not bring him to bankruptcy he must be taken to have thrown up poetry. Let us hear Burns himself. 'The character and employment of a poet,' he writes to Moore in 1789, 'were formerly my pleasure, but are now my pride. . . . I have not a doubt but the knack, the aptitude to learn the muses' trade, is a gift bestowed by Him "who forms the secret bias of the soul;" but I as firmly believe that *excellence* in the profession is the fruit of industry, labour, attention and pains. . . . Another appearance from the press I put off to a very distant day, a day that may never arrive—but poesy I am determined to prosecute with all my vigour.' To the same effect he writes to the celebrated Harry Erskine: 'I have no great faith in the boastful pretensions to intuitive propriety and unlabored elegance. The rough material of Fine Writing is certainly the gift of Genius; but I as firmly believe that the workmanship is the united effort of Pains, Attention, and repeated Trial.' As late as May 1796, a few weeks before his death, when he was meditating an edition of his songs, polished up to date, he wrote to Thomson, 'I had rather be the author of five well-written songs than of ten otherwise.'

Then as to his method. It was not that of sitting down and concocting so much 'copy' in the hour. He watched for the inspired moment, and when he felt the power on him he wrote and perfected the expression. He tells Cunningham, 'I have felt along the line of my Muse's inclination, and I fear your Archery subject would be uphill work with her. I have two or three times in my life composed from the wish rather than from the impulse, but I never succeeded to any purpose.'

Whene'er my muse does on me glance
I jingle at her—

is his account of the process at an earlier date. With such ideals of excellence, and such a method of reaching it, was it desirable

or possible for Burns, immediately after the first outburst of his genius, to commence throwing cartloads of rhyme on the market, as some of his critics apparently think he should have done? Nobody ever demanded that Watt should invent an equivalent to the steam-engine, or Columbus discover a new continent, or Harvey a rival to blood-circulation, every year of their lives, on pain of being found traitors to the intellectual life, and disqualified for Fame. But Burns must make at least one Mossgiel sunrise per annum, otherwise he shall be found to have wrecked his reputation and drowned his poetic power in drink. Was it not better that Burns should secrete fifty or sixty poetic pearls than manufacture unlimited pyramids of versicular bricks? But Burns can stand even the barbarous test of quantity. Take the two hundred and fifty songs which he wrote or remodelled, take the amount of critical and historical material which he amassed in connection with them, take his innumerable letters, many of them most elaborately composed and copied out, the mere rescued remains of which fill several portly volumes, take the large number of pieces unpublished or destroyed for political or private reasons, and it may well be doubted whether such a literary output, in mere bulk, ever came in the like period from a man who had, at the same time, to labour for his daily bread.

But, it is said, this was all mere trifling: song-writing was simply an amusement for Burns, who never concentrated himself all these years on a great poetic undertaking. Burns himself did not think song-writing so trifling and simple a matter. 'The world,' he says, writing to the author of 'Tullochgorum,' 'may think slightly of the craft of song-writing if they please; but, as Job says, "O that mine adversary had written a book!"—let them try.' 'Those who think that composing a Scotch song is a trifling business—let them try it,' he writes to Hoy, the Duke of Gordon's agent, acknowledging a song of the latter. There is not one of Burns's grudging critics who could have written a single stanza of 'Mary in Heaven' though he had been given eternity to do it in. As to concentration on a great work, was not the history, reconstruction, and purification of the songs of Scotland a great work at which Burns plodded on, year after year, and was just

finishing when death descended on him in the act? The truth is that Burns, while waiting for the leisure that he looked for in the near future, and calculating that he had twenty-five or thirty years before him in which to produce something on a larger scale and truly worthy of himself, made himself, by way of killing the time and keeping his hand in, the first lyrist of the world. Nothing could be more contrary to fact than that Burns deserted poetry. Neither in purpose nor in fact had his devotion slackened. A broad view of his life at the moment of its close, making allowance for admitted imperfections, suggests the question whether there was or could be a nobler career in process of working out anywhere. In the meantime, what had many of his censors been making of themselves? They had been growing harder, greedier, falser, narrower, more selfish, more cruel, more intellectually blind or dead, though perhaps somewhat better off, while Burns had been growing, if possible, in veracity, in fearless outspokenness, in noble indignation at wrong, in generosity, in tenderness, in varied power of strong thought and beautiful expression, in all that goes to the making of a high-souled man of genius. Time only was wanting to realise his design, and Time was denied him. But, though lack of time stopped achievement, it could not alter the noble basis of character on which Burns was working when the night came in which no man can work.

XIII.

Fortunately, when we come to Burns's position as a man of genius and a poet, there is less controversial material to deal with, although even here the voice of detraction is not altogether unheard. But Burns has stood the test of time. One great genius after another has put his work to the proof, and the greatest have borne the strongest testimony to its power and its art. Among the Scottish people, which means all over the world, and among a large section of the English people too, there is no poet more keenly read and more frequently quoted. At this hour Burns is more popular, in the strict sense of that term, than Shakespeare, Milton, or Wordsworth, to say nothing of other great names. The explanation of this is not to be found in social and political considerations, although these have a place. Burns is the poor man's

champion, who compelled 'the great' to remember that they were partakers of a common nature and innumerable common experiences with the humble, and that humble life had its virtues, its delights, its heroisms, its glories, and its rights, not less than the highest. Moreover, Burns was the poet of democracy in days when the word was more dangerous to use with sympathy than it is now. These characteristics deservedly bespeak for him a cordial welcome among the great masses of the people; but it is not by these that he retains his hold. He does so because he deals not with abstractions and philosophies in elaborate effusions, which are often barely intelligible even to the learned in such matters, but with facts of daily and universal human experience, and in a way that is irresistibly attractive and delightful, because of its pith, vividness, beauty, humour, pathos, music, wisdom. Never has the definition of genius as 'the power of seeing wonders in common things' had a more notable illustration than in the case of Burns.

Take the 'Haggis,' to an ordinary mind probably the most unpoetical subject conceivable. An English editor of Burns has described it as 'a conglomeration of minced offal of mutton, oat-meal, and suet, duly seasoned with salt and pepper, and thoroughly boiled up to one luscious whole inside a sheep's stomach, which, while satisfying the stomach of every true Scot . . . would probably turn that of every other inhabitant of the three kingdoms.' Yet, in Burns's hands, it becomes the material for a triumph of Homeric word-painting and arch humour. The Gargantuan delineation of the dish as it fills the 'groaning trencher;' the Titanic carving of 'rustic Labour' as he 'trenches' it 'like onie ditch;' the expedition and eagerness of the hungry symposiasts as 'horn for horn they stretch and strive, Deil tak' the hindmost;' the mock-heroics over the 'ragout or fricassee-fed Frenchman' and his consequent incapacity for battle compared with the 'haggis-fed' Scot, 'the earth resounding his tread,' and the foe flying into fragments before his swordsmanship; with the ironic yet not irreverent petition that his native land may be kept well supplied with 'haggis,' and preserved from the 'skinking ware that jaups in luggies,' together form a picture and a commentary from which only the wooden and the superfine can fail to derive a huge delight. It would be useless to enumerate the

instances in which Burns, from origins little more promising, educes the highest poetical successes, not only creating pleasure but awakening sympathy, touching sensibility, suggesting the wisest reflection.

This effect was not the fruit of accident on Burns's part. It resulted from a deliberately selected plan. What that plan was Burns tells us himself. In the preface to the first edition of his poems he says that his aim is 'to sing the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers around him, to transcribe the various feelings—the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears—in his own breast.' Word-pictures of himself and his experiences, with their moral, was what Burns felt inspired to produce. In the case of a commonplace man this might not promise much, except boredom. But, given a man of universal sympathy, of infinite sensibility, with an eye that could not only see the mystery of life but could penetrate it as far as any human eye that ever essayed the great discovery, with a trained capacity of expression never surpassed in its own sphere, and you have the possibilities of what might be entrancing and instructive enough. The world beneath his eye, and the world within his breast, reproduced by passing through the alembic of Burns's poetic intelligence, might yield much that would interest men of every kind and class. The mannerisms of rank and learning cannot eradicate the human nature of which all are partakers; and when a man like Burns, with a power to seize and delineate the universally human in any phase of feeling or any situation in life, sets forth, with the witchery of style which he had made his own, his impressions of the world and the sentiments it has aroused in himself, he appeals to something beyond the local, the personal, or the sectional from which he starts, and evokes a response from every human heart that is amenable to the call of feeling or of thought. In working out this poetic method there was scarcely a position of general human interest that Burns missed. Love, friendship, joy, grief, despair, hope, resolution, conviviality, glee, reflection, the charm of nature, the beauty of woman, the dignity of man, the truth of religion, the standard of duty, every conceivable relation to the present and the future are caught by Burns in some concrete and actual instance, and so dealt with by him that every competent observer recognises him-

self in the poetic mirror, and knows that in some of life's most critical experiences he has not been alone.

Hence Burns, as an actual poetic influence, has never died. More abstract and learned poets may reflect the philosophy of their day, and for a time be in request among the limited class that can fully or almost understand them; but a new philosophy, demanding a new hierophant, becomes fashionable, and the former days and their spokesman are forgotten. But Burns's characters, like Homer's, are perennial. While the distinction of rich and poor endures, men, especially poor men, will read 'The Twa Dogs' and the 'First Epistle to Davie' and 'A Man's a Man for a' that.' 'Holy Willie,' the most powerfully-drawn hypocrite in literature, beside whom Tartufe or Pecksniff looks reedy and feeble, has his successors in every generation. 'Jolly Beggars' and 'Dr Horn-books' and the 'Unco Guid' still abound. Sympathy, not merely with man, but with bird and beast, will ever be awakened by 'Mailie's Elegy,' by the 'Mouse,' by 'The Farmer and his Mare,' by 'The wounded Hare' and 'The scattered Wildfowl,' by the poet's concern for the cattle in the snowdrift and the bird in the night tempest. While youth woos beauty there will be students of 'Mary Morison' and 'A' the airts' and 'The lea-rig' and 'Mary in Heaven,' and solace and guidance will be sought in 'Duncan Gray' and 'Tam Glen' and 'Last May a braw Wooer.' The pathos of life's evening will never find a happier or fuller expression than in 'John Anderson, my Jo,' or 'Auld Lang Syne.' It may be said the dialect will become unintelligible; but more probably the charm of the matter and style will keep the dialect alive, and then, as now, representative students, in all countries, will master as much of the dialect as will enable them to feel their way and be guides to others.

XIV.

The ethical and intellectual elements in man are inextricably bound up together, and Burns's choice of his poetic method was largely the dictate of his moral nature. The ideal that Burns worshipped was the 'honest man.' 'He who has lived the life of an honest man,' he writes, as his best word of comfort to an unfortunate friend, 'has by no means lived in vain:' and his own career

is a splendid illustration of the truth thus moderately expressed. Not in vain, as far as humanity is concerned, did Burns exercise that honesty, that veracity, that absolute 'sincerity' which Carlyle singles out as the keynote of all his utterances. Certainly, it determined his choice of material. Burns could not work among unrealities, with things he did not know. Philosophic guess-work was not for him. Though he might try, he would not pretend to see where he felt he was in the dark. The manners of 'the great' were comparatively an unknown world to him. He would not invent subjects, for that would have been to be ashamed of nature and fact. And Burns was not ashamed of either, or indeed of anything for which he was not himself to blame. Currie said that Burns's misfortunes were his own fault; but it could hardly be his fault that he was born to a lot of the deepest poverty and incessant toil. M. Taine has accused Burns of being ashamed of his circumstances, and of wishing to be thought something finer than he was. Owing to this vanity, he says, 'twice out of every three times his feeling is marred by his pretentiousness.' This is a hard saying, and certainly unique among criticisms of Burns. Perhaps it may obviate the necessity of answering other criticisms to pause and consider the proofs of this one adduced by its author.

One proof is a single passage in one of Burns's letters to Clarinda, which Burns probably produced as more or less conscious rhodomontade, and would have classed with the 'fustian rant' which he admitted was to be found in other letters to the same and other correspondents. To judge a man by his erotic outpourings may be effective Buzfuz pleading in an action for breach of promise of marriage, but it is not fair literary criticism. Another proof is that, although Burns was a 'Scotch villager,' he 'avoided in speaking all Scotch village expressions.' Suppose it were so, where was the harm? Burns was not exclusively a 'Scotch villager:' he was also the first man of letters of his day, and when he appeared in that character it was natural and becoming that he should speak the language of literature. M. Taine says that it was 'to show himself as well-bred as fashionable folks.' As a matter of fact, in the command of language Burns was better bred than any of them, and did not need to show off; but the 'fashionable folks' who actually encountered him unanimously acquit him of anything like affectation. Another of M. Taine's proofs is that

Burns 'committed to his Commonplace Book literary expressions that occurred to him, and six months afterwards sent them to his correspondent as extemporary expressions and natural improvisations.' Here the critic adopts, and represents as a matter of constant occurrence, a single instance in which it has been said that this took place—namely, the letter to Mrs Dunlop, containing his eloquent, outspoken, and valuable deliverance on the immortality of the soul, which is affirmed 'to have been a deliberate transcription, with some amplifications, from an entry of his last year's Commonplace Book.'

Will it be believed that there is not a vestige of foundation for this assertion, as the critic might have seen for himself had he taken the pains to look? When the two documents are compared, the only expressions they have in common are found to be two quotations, one from the Bible, 'What is man?' and the other from Blair, author of *The Grave*, which was continually on Burns's lips when he spoke of death. There is not another phrase common to the two writings. The whole thing is a mare's nest. M. Taine's remaining proof is a saying attributed to Burns, 'Never did a heart pant more ardently than mine to be distinguished,' on which the solemn remark is made, 'this grievous pride marred his talent, and threw him into follies;' and then follow as instances the 'follies' already discussed. Burns, of course, with characteristic honesty, made no secret of his desire for Fame. In the preface to his first edition he avows frankly 'that dearest wish of every poetic bosom—to be distinguished.' And why not? In the case of a great and true genius like Burns the desire of distinction is simply a form of the desire to see justice done. If he has a right to be distinguished, why should he not assert that right by showing what he is capable of? Justice is not the less justice because it is done to one's self. The man who will not see justice done in his own case is not likely to trouble himself greatly with the wrongs of other people. Of course everything depends on the claim being well founded. A fool who believes himself a genius is not a self-conscious but a self-conceited person, and his endeavour to snatch distinction is an attempt at larceny *in excelsis*, which must be put down. It may be asked, why should not Burns have despired the approbation of mankind? But that would have been downright misanthropy, a sentiment

impossible for a true poet, certainly for Burns. Burns's desire for distinction was simply self-respect *plus* respect for his fellow-men. It may be added that the writer who has occasioned this digression is the same who alleged of the country which can boast an agriculture unsurpassed in the world, and which contains the Lothians, Morayshire, the How of Fife, the Carse of Gowrie and Stirling, the early potato-fields of Ayrshire, with sheep-walks and cattle-runs which will stand any comparison, that 'the soil is wretched,' and proves it by the fact that 'there are many bare hills, where the harvest often fails.' It seems that a man may have looked through much literature and history, and have great capacity for forming striking theories, historical, æsthetic, or other, and yet, on occasion, show little common sense, knowledge of human nature, regard for justice, or even perception of the ridiculous.

XV.

Burns, then, was not ashamed of the facts with which Nature and Destiny had surrounded him. Fidelity to fact, loyalty to Nature, 'to thine own self be true,' formed his poetic code of conduct. Nature, and fact, and feeling, as actually presented to him by his own fate, were what affected, interested, and stirred himself; and if he was to speak affectingly, interestingly, or stirringly to others, it was of these things he must speak, not of fanciful situations, invented incidents, or factitious sentiments. Thus did Burns's straightforward, intellectual honesty, seizing instinctively on the real, enable him to grasp the key of universal success, which so many artificialised, if otherwise powerful, poets have so often missed. If you look carefully through Burns's work, you will find that almost every piece deals with some real incident, feeling, personality, or scene which for the time had roused the poet's interest. His own father, the Presbytery of Ayr, whether Old Light or New, David Sillar, John Lapraik, William Simpson, Gavin Hamilton, Tam Samson, 'Slee' Smith, Preacher M'Math, 'ready-witted' Rankine, the 'Calf,' Holy Willie, the Twa Herds, Russell and Moodie, M'Adam of Craigengillan, Tennant of Glenconner, Goudie of Kilmarnock, Graham of Fintry, Matthew Henderson, Daer and Glencairn, 'Willie Pitt,' the 'ill-tongued tinkler Charlie Fox,' Allan and Willie of the Peck o'

Maut, Jock Hornbook of the Clachan, Bonnie Jean, Handsome Nell, the Lass of Ballochmyle, Nancy of the Ae Fond Kiss, Charlotte Hamilton and Peggy Chalmers of winding Devon, Chloris, Lovely Davies, Jessie Lewars of the Cauld Blast, and many more, were actual characters known to Burns, and most of them immortalised by him.

So necessary was the real to his method that if he had not an actual heroine for a song, he 'put himself in the regimen of admiring a fine woman.' Poor Mailie, the Auld Mare, the Mouse, the Daisy, the nameless intruder on Miss's fine Lunardi, the wounded Hare, the Waterfowl of Loch Turit, are all historical realities worked up into general applications, most of which are in daily and world-wide use as citations of authority. Scotch Drink and Haggis are memorable facts to all who have known them. The 'Unco Guid' were Burns's own censors at Tarbolton or Mauchline. The Epistle to a Young Friend, a homily on a higher plane than Polonius's advice to his son, was written with a genuine desire to benefit young Andrew Aiken, the son of Aiken of the Cotter's Saturday Night. Burns saw Hallowe'en and the Holy Fair with his own eyes. He had seen the Ayr as gurgling it kissed its pebbled shore, and he had seen it 'in spate,' when, from Glenbuck down to the Rattonkey, it was one lengthened, tumbling sea. He had seen sweet Coila's haughs and woods, when lintwhites chant among the buds. He had seen, too, the frosts on hills of Ochiltree, and listened when winds raved through the naked tree, and marked the blinding drifts wild furious flee, darkening the day. Tam o' Shanter and Souther Johnnie he knew, and had observed equivalents of the alehouse revel in Ayr and the thunderstorm on the Alloway road.

But chief of all, his most powerful subjective delineations, whether sorrowful or exultant, passionate or reflective, are founded in reality, being all photographs of his own actual phases of consciousness at the moment—'transcriptions,' as he himself puts it, of 'the various feelings in his own breast,' which in the case of such a man pretty nearly exhausted the gamut of possible human emotion. The wild abandonment of reckless joy, the anguish of an upbraiding conscience, the whole struggle of the soul with itself, reverence for the mysterious Power on which all things depend, scorn of cant and falsehood, contempt of folly, mirthful appreciation

of the oddities of life and man, indignation at baseness and tyranny, delight in friendship and sociality, resentment against intrusive pride, pity for the suffering of all that feels, aspiration after a juster and happier structure of society, wise and sober contemplation of life and duty, the raptures of the hopeful, the anxieties of the despairing, the heart-breaking disappointment of the rejected or deserted lover, the hilarities of welcome, the sadness of farewell—these and much more, common to all human experience, Burns has set forth, as they actually occurred in the world of his own spirit, with absolute fullness and fidelity.

XVI.

The same intellectual honesty which directed Burns to his materials guided him also in dealing with them. He would be thorough and outspoken, and have no reservations, though his frankness should tell against himself. He would speak not only the truth, and nothing but the truth, but 'the whole truth.' Hence many of his utterances are terrific or bewitching in their power, because they are so true. Nothing would stop him from saying what he thought and felt. Religion, that most perilous of all topics for the votary of ease and quiet, could not scare him in his fearless candour. He was not an atheist. Religious emotion was a powerful constituent in his habitual consciousness. An irreligious poet, he held, was 'a monster.' But he was not orthodox. He did not believe in the Confession of Faith, and probably regarded the prevailing theological and ecclesiastical system as a delusion, and its louder clerical and other spokesmen as more or less consciously canting and hypocritical. Thinking so, he did not scruple to say so, and lashed the system and many of its professors with unsparing satire. Here much depends on whether Burns was right or wrong in his rejection of orthodoxy. If he was wrong, he was a vast power for evil, and orthodox believers were and are right in execrating his influence. But great numbers of people then and now, and those not the least respectable of the community whether as regards intelligence or character, have thought Burns right, and in their view he has been a great influence for truth. This is not the place to argue on one side or the other of what is perhaps the greatest controversy of the pre-

sent and the future ; but it is only fair to recognise with due admiration the courage of Burns in giving expression to his convictions in full view of the abiding obloquy which he was to incur.

Not even in his temporary defiance of some of the great moral conventions, which he lived to condemn, though he never recanted his theological heterodoxy, would he be reticent. What he had done he would avow, though it left a blot on some of his best work. It was the same with whatever else he touched. The mood of the moment must be fully figured forth. Was he sad? There was a dirge in the pessimistic strain. Was he glad? There was a lilt of gay *insouciance*. Was he reflective? There was a rhymed epitome of the highest wisdom. Was he in love? The whole play of his heart was laid open. Was he angry? He cried aloud and spared not. Was he self-critical? There was contrite confession, stern self-condemnation, and virtuous resolve. Hence Burns must be read with a caution. Protestant divines tell us that to understand the Word, scripture must be compared with scripture. So Burns must often be compared with Burns to get the final and true Burns; Burns despairing must be read with Burns hopeful; Burns humorous must be interpreted by Burns serious; Burns resentful by Burns reconciled; Burns the Jacobite by Burns the Democrat; 'Scotch Drink' and the 'Peck o' Maut' must be collated with the 'Beadsman of Nithside,' and any seeming condonation of license read in the light of the 'Epistle to a Young Friend' or a 'Bard's Epitaph.'

The effect on Burns's poetic form of this free and fearless method of treating the real, whether in fact or feeling, is obvious. First of all, it gave him the clearest possible image of what he had to delineate, and next it left him at absolute liberty to say whatever was essential to a perfect delineation. Of course, even under the stimulus of the real, it requires genius to rise to heights of feeling or flow out in wealth of reflection, but genius itself cannot yield this response half so readily or fully in relation to the abstract as when in contact with the real. And thus Burns was always placed, by his method, in the position of greatest advantage for making the very utmost of whatever theme happened to have inspired him. All that remained was the adaptation of language

to conception, which is no doubt the final test of literary craftsmanship, although we have it on high authority that a powerful grasp of the matter will give command of words and clear arrangement. However it came, Burns had a mastery of language. Within his own sphere his style is unsurpassed, perhaps unsurpassable. Whatever he had to convey, he could almost instantaneously seize upon the aptest words, not one too few nor one too many; and, as by a lightning flash, a vivid picture stands out before the imagination, or the soul is filled with emotion, pathetic, pensive, or humorous, and always musical. There is neither stint nor waste of means with Burns. He does more in a few lines than most others in as many pages, and this rapidity in the production of his effects is half their charm. He not merely impresses, he electrifies.

The normal descriptive poet gives you a leisurely inventory of the botany and geologic upheavings of his imaginary landscape. Burns, who has seen his, and has it in his mind's eye, touches in the two or three characteristic points, and, the background thus set up, introduces at once the large human interest to which he always subordinates any scenic setting, and in a second you are full of intense sympathy, admiration, aversion, or whatever other sentiment is congruous. In sketching a person or a character, the ordinary describer is in general painfully minute, almost resorting to the anthropometric system so as to secure identification; and the same with real or sentimental situations. But take Burns's

Dear Smith, the slee'st, pawkie thief
 That e'er attempted stealth or rief,
 Ye surely ha'e some warlock-breef
 Owre human hearts;
 For ne'er a bosom yet was prief
 Against your arts.

Or the portrait of Grose, captain and antiquary :

If in your bounds ye chance to light
 Upon a fine, fat, fodgeg wight,
 O' stature short, but genius bright,
 That's he, mark weel—
 And wow ! he has an unco slight
 O' cauk and keel.

.

But wad ye see him in his glee,
 For meikle glee and fun has he,
 Then set him down, and twa or three
 Guid fellows wi' him ;
 And port, O port ! shine thou a wee,
 And then ye 'll see him !

Or :

As Tammie glowered, amazed and curious,
 The mirth and fun grew fast and furious !
 The piper loud and louder blew ;
 The dancers quick and quicker flew ;
 They reeled, they set, they crossed, they cleekit,
 Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
 And coost her duddies to the wark,
 And linket at it in her sark !

Or :

We twa ha'e paidl't in the burn,
 Frae mornin' sun till dine ;
 But seas between us braid ha'e roared
 Sin' auld lang syne.

How many chapters would it take the three-volume novelist to give us half the idea of the people or the incidents which Burns here hits off to perfection with one or two dashes of his magic brush ?

XVII.

But regarding this literary deftness of Burns, was there, or could there be, anything of the characteristic Burns veracity here ? Of course there was, as will clearly appear on consideration. As we have seen, Burns was no believer in excellence not attained by labour. He knew there must be genius to begin with, but genius, he held, could achieve artistic finish only by patient toil. That had been his own experience. It was once customary—and the remark is occasionally heard still—to speak of Burns as a kind of prodigy, who, without culture, displayed all the results of culture, as if Art in its perfection had suddenly descended upon him from the sky. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The real wonder about Burns was not as to how, in his case, untutored genius supplied the want of artistic culture, but how amidst his life of abject poverty and toil—‘the cheerless gloom of a hermit with the unceasing toil of a galley-slave’—he acquired the requisite culture

which he undoubtedly possessed. When Burns wrote the 'Jolly Beggars' and the contents of the First Edition he was not an inspired barbarian but a consummate artist. It was wonderful that he should be so; but when the facts are scrutinised, the wonder ceases and shifts into admiration of the 'iron resolution' which animated the young aspirant after poetic distinction and sustained him during years of persistent study and effort. By the time he was sixteen Burns had an infinitely better-furnished literary consciousness than all his gerund-ground contemporaries of Eton and Winchester; and when he was five-and-twenty he had more literary skill than a century of Oxford Prize Poem makers rolled into one. Think of the avidity and determination with which, as Gilbert Burns tells us, he read even the biggest and most difficult books, and think what books he had mastered up to his seventeenth year. He and Gilbert have given us the list.

In that list we find 'some Plays of Shakspeare.' Surely no more striking picture is conceivable than young Burns ransacking the Shakespearian treasure-house. With such a master and such a learner, who can calculate the amount of poetic culture assimilated in that single operation? Why, Burns would take more out of Shakspeare in a winter evening than Hugh Blair or Dugald Stewart, or any of the humdrum, and, except for Burns, forgotten literati of the day could have appropriated all their lives. But note what other subjects he had examined and what other models he had mastered—for with Burns to read a book was to make it part of himself. He had read the *Pantheon* and Pope's *Homer*, a considerable book on Geography and General History, Hervey's *Meditations* and Stackhouse's large *History of the Bible* (full of ancient history), the *Lives of Hannibal and Wallace*, *Lives of James I. and Charles I.*, a treatise on Agriculture, another on Horticulture, a volume of the *Boyle Lectures*, Derham's *Physico-and Astro-Theology*, Ray's *Wisdom of God in Creation*, Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, and Taylor's *Doctrine of Original Sin*. He knew of course the Catechism of the Westminster Divines, the best conceivable exposition of the Calvinistic theology, and he had in his head Betty Davidson's matchless repertory of Scottish folklore. In other words, he understood the Historical, the Mythological, the Scientific, the Metaphysical, the Theological, and the Religio-sentimental points of view. With

such an equipment of general intelligence, a young genius might do much. But besides this, in addition to all of Shakespear and Homer he could lay his hands on, with Fénélon's *Télémaque* (in the original), he knew in literature proper the *Spectator*; Pope, Richardson in *Pamela*, Smollett in *Count Fathom* and *Peregrine Pickle*, Allan Ramsay, and a remarkable collection of English songs he had lighted on. That is to say, he had looked into the Classic and French worlds of Fancy, and had caught the spirit of the best creations of the ages of Elizabeth and Anne, and of not the worst of the Georgian era, of Scottish pastoral and of Scotch and English lyrical poetry. Could this be called an untutored plough-boy?

But his intellect was not merely receptive: it was fermenting, active, and productive in all directions. He had already made attempts in rhyme, and as time went on he had 'usually half-a-dozen or more pieces on hand.' Meanwhile he was making the most of his collection of songs; carrying it with him wherever he went, 'poring over' it, as he tells us, 'driving my cart or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noting the tender or sublime from fustian'—the voracious young intellect would not be swindled into admiration of the false. Besides this, he was busy acquiring power of ready reasoning and precise speech at discussion societies and Masonic lodges, and even at church gates 'between sermons,' on the heretical side in theological debates, studying more poets, Thomson, Shenstone, and especially Fergusson, as he could get at them, and trying the effect of his own repeated and numerous efforts on brother Gilbert and John Blane the serving-man, and others. Nor was his energising confined to verse. He had accidentally become possessed of 'a collection of letters by the wits of Queen Anne's reign,' over which he tells us he 'pored most devoutly,' and he determined, through letter-writing, to make himself master of an English prose style as well as of Scotch verse. With his usual instinct for the real, he did not begin writing sham letters, to himself, like Mr Toots, or from himself, but 'I engaged several of my schoolfellows to keep up a literary correspondence with me,' and 'though I had not three-farthings' worth of business in the world, yet every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad, plodding son of day-book and ledger.' By letter-writing, indeed, he seems to

have set great store. It was one of the realities of life, and he thought it should be done as well as possible. Long afterwards, when he was famous, he wrote to his youngest brother, William, to whom he acted as the wisest and kindest of fathers, 'I am indebted to you for one of the best letters that has been written by any mechanic lad in Nithsdale or Annandale, or any dale on either side of the Border, this twelvemonth. Not that I would have you always affect the stately stilts of studied composition, but surely writing a handsome letter is an accomplishment worth courting.'

Regarding his own success in this 'accomplishment' there can be little doubt, if we make the needful distinctions. As with his verse, so with his prose, everything publishable has been published, through the rivalry of collectors and the greed of bibliopoles. Very much of both Burns would himself have relentlessly suppressed, and in particular that part of the prose which, as we have already seen, he had described as the 'fustian rant of extravagant youth.' But much remains of sterling value alike as regards matter and style; to certain correspondents he wrote with an air of constraint, resulting in stiffness or even stiltedness, because, in employing the prose of business, he could not use the freedom of the 'bard;' but in other cases, where he felt himself free, his letters have an easy and spontaneous play of wise or beautiful sentiment, expressed with a powerful simplicity, flashing out occasionally into brilliancy or rising into true sublimity, on which it would be difficult to improve. Lockhart is no more than just when he praises the 'excellent English in which Burns wooed his country maidens in at most his twenty-second year.' The historian Robertson perhaps goes far enough when he prefers the best of Burns's prose to the best of his poetry, but undoubtedly it was not the prosaic prose habitually produced by too many practitioners in that form of composition.

XVIII.

But with Burns, prose, carefully as he worked at it, was only a secondary object—what he aimed at was to be a poet; and if we would fully understand the discipline he put himself through here we must look forward a little. We know how he wrote his

songs—many of them famous lyrical masterpieces—in the Ellisland-Dumfries period. He first got the tune into his head, with violin or flute—he had learnt a little of both—or other instrumental assistance, if necessary. Then he worked the words into the march and cadence of the music—frequently a task of much difficulty, for Burns was nervously averse to unapt or unnecessary words, and only once or twice allowed editor Thomson to tempt him into redundant and mischief-making adjectives. Then, when the song seemed fairly presentable, he had it sung to him by his wife, painstakingly correcting whatever blemishes or defects occurred to him as a listener. And when no more could be done he despatched the fair copy to the publisher, generally with an accompaniment of song-lore half-a-dozen times as bulky as the song itself. Let it be remembered, however, that this laborious process was nothing new with Burns. It was a mere continuation of what he did in the youthful period when he was slowly learning his art. As he says in the really wonderful epistle to Davie :

On braes when we please then,
We'll sit and sowth a tune ;
Syne rhyme till 't we'll time till 't,
And sing 't when we ha'e dune—

or, to put it in more homely form, get the tune, time the rhyme to it, and try how it will sing—a method exactly inverting the customary one, which leaves the song at the mercy of the composer, and creating much more work and responsibility for the poet, but seemingly justified by success.

Now, what we have to realise is this various intellectual labour, this process of alternate literary acquisition and reproduction, this persistent self-drill in the practice of poetic and general style, carried on for eight or nine years at the most impressionable period of life. A great genius so trained could not help being what Burns really was when he shot like a meteor into the literary firmament—the most finished poetic artist of his time. But mark, it was the lofty moral nature of the man, the dominating veracity in him, that won half the victory. True, the desire of distinction, as well as the love of poetry for its own sake, may have spurred him on, but it was his essential honesty of soul that determined him not to grasp at fame on false pretences. If he

was to be honoured, he would deserve it. He would not allow false or inferior work to pass out of his hands. Perfection or nothing were his alternatives. And so he toiled until, at last, in many cases he came up to his own standard, and satisfied himself, embodying the perfect thought or feeling in the perfect form; second, if indeed always second, to Homer alone in the craft of conveying the maximum of high conception in the minimum of fittest words. And yet this Homer-like singer has been refused the title of 'classic' by a late conspicuous, if perhaps somewhat narrow and whimsical, English critic,* on the ground that he is deficient in so-called 'high seriousness.' This characterisation is worth a passing comment. Of course, any one may, for his own private use, define 'classic' or any other term in any way he pleases; but a definition which would seem to exclude every poet who ever smiled, from Aristophanes to Molière, and leave us in these islands with only Shakespeare in his crown, and perhaps Milton sitting half-way down the steps of the throne, may not unreasonably be suspected of arbitrariness and paradox.

But accept the definition. Surely there was in Burns not merely a 'high' but a tragic 'seriousness.' We mistake when we isolate the separate pieces of Burns's work, and equally mistake when we isolate his poetry from his letters. His work must be taken as a whole. It has a unity—the unity of a continuous self-revelation. Never before or since has a great nature, alike in its strength and its weakness, been so completely laid bare for the observation and study of mankind. This self-revelation of Burns has in it elements of the terrible: it is so absolutely true, without one note of the false or the affected, so unreservedly sincere, with no indirect purpose and nothing kept back. So rare a spectacle it is impossible to pass by without remarking and examining it, especially as over and through it all we hear the ringing of a unique poetic style, now sweet and melting in love or hope, now jingling forth joy and merriment, now tolling the deep note of woe or despair. If Burns's work, as a whole, was not 'serious' work, and of a 'high' order too in that way, and if his style, despite its genuine Homeric qualities, is not 'classic,' so much the worse, it may be, for the 'serious' and the 'classic,' and we shall have to put him into a class by himself.

* Mr Matthew Arnold.

XIX.

How to classify Burns, what position to assign him in the great Pantheon of genius, is a task that must be attempted, but also one not easily accomplished. It is quite certain that he must be put very much higher than was done with him by the critical world of his day. Not that they altogether failed to recognise an element of unusual power in him. Small thanks to them for that ; it was inevitable. But though the Blairs and others probably knew and believed that to be a poet one must be born so, they had great difficulty in imagining that he could be born in circumstances that precluded a university education. Hence there was a sort of intellectual grudge against Burns on the part of some of the contemporary dispensers of fame. He had not, they thought, quite a right to what they nevertheless found themselves obliged to give him. They felt that he really ought to have come of a regularly-educated family. Besides, it is always difficult to realise that the man whom you see every day going in and out, like yourself, in the ordinary business and enjoyment of life is so transcendently your own superior. A generation or two must usually pass away before the greatness of a truly great man is fully appreciated. Carlyle had noted the patronising air pervading Currie's account of Burns and that of others, and there is too much evidence that a great number of his contemporaries, and those not of the least influential class, thought little more of him than that he was very well for a ploughman or an exciseman. Otherwise it is impossible, after everything has been considered and allowed for, to understand why some more determined effort was not made to place him in a position where he could have lived for the function to which Nature had manifestly designated him.

Posterity has made up for any shortcomings of contemporary judgment, and has recognised him as the greatest genius in his country's literature. Nor is this an insignificant distinction. From Dunbar to Scott, and even farther down, Scotland has given birth to many men of genuine poetic genius ; but a practically unbroken consensus of Scottish opinion has placed Burns on a pedestal of honour above them all, and made him known throughout the world as The National Poet. By that is meant not merely that he is the poet who most fully or best delineates the national characteristics ; but that, of all

the poets whom the nation has produced, he has displayed the most superb gifts and done the highest kind of poetic work. A critic here and there has suggested a claim on behalf of Dunbar or Scott, but public opinion has not confirmed the preference. As regards Dunbar, it might be argued that no comparison is called for, as the pre-Reformation Scotland for which he wrote was virtually a different nation from the post-Reformation Scotland that Burns addressed, where he reigns without a rival, and where Dunbar is forgotten.

Yet were it otherwise, there seems no reason for reversing the national judgment. Dunbar's powers of humour, satire, and graphic representation were of a very high order, barely second, if at all, say his admirers, to Chaucer's, whose literary disciple he avowed himself to be. His command of language, also, and the easy flow of his versification are admirable, and worthy of all the praise bestowed upon them by Sir David Lyndsay of The Mount. But in all these respects Burns at least equalled, and in some far excelled him, while he had poetic qualities of the most exquisite character which are not to be found in Dunbar. The tenderness, the sympathy, the music, the passion by which Burns touched the finest chords in the human heart, and which make his immense laughter a joy as well as a judgment, are absent from Dunbar's genius. Dunbar's derision, which is probably his strongest point, is of a bitter and biting character, and leads him not seldom into false positions, where a true poet should not be found. His Tournament between the Tailor and the Souter, for example, notwithstanding its ultra-Rabelaisian coarseness, has abundance of humour in it, which is intensified by the ironical apology tendered subsequently to the respectable avocations so ridiculed, and would greatly delight the Court lords and ladies of the day. A considerable part of his humorous effects are derived from cases of conjugal infidelity, in which the injured husband is treated as the appropriate object of mirth. In this comical diversion at the expense of the unfortunate there is an element of cruelty which was alien to the nature of Burns. There is a pervading humour in the 'Twa Dogs,' 'The Brigs of Ayr,' 'Mailie's Dying Words and Elegy,' 'The Mouse,' 'The crawlin' ferlie' on Miss's bonnet, the 'Address to the Deil,' 'Tam o' Shanter,' the 'Haggis,' 'Captain

Grose,' 'Meeting with Lord Daer,' 'Guid Mornin' to your Majesty,' 'Duncan Gray,' 'Last May a braw Wooer,' 'Tam Glen,' and many another; but it is a genial and sympathetic humour which we may fully enjoy without the sense of having been accessory to an act of inhumanity.

Burns, of course, when he chose, could raise a sufficiently scathing laughter against the object of his aggressive humour; but, as a rule, he did so only when he believed that object deserved it. In that case, his power of ridicule became a scourge wielded by his moral indignation. 'Holy Willie,' 'The Holy Fair,' 'The Ordination,' 'The Kirk's Alarm,' and others have been and will continue to be the vehicles of a gigantic laughter that is perfectly Olympian in its overwhelming power. But Burns was completely in earnest when attacking what he regarded as the cant, the hypocritical life, the false theology of his time: 'I gae mad,' he says,

' At their grimaces,
Their sighin', cantin', grace-proud faces,
Their three-mile prayers, and half-mile graces,
 Their raxin' conscience
Whase greed, revenge, and pride disgraces
 Waur nor their nonsense.'

It was the reverse side of his love of truth and honesty. Hence he threw the whole of his highest soul into the attack, his passion enlisting in its service the vivid directness, the bounding movement, the picturesque and mirth-moving facility, and all the qualities of a style almost unmatched in its varied power; with the result of producing a form of high-pitched satire unsurpassed, if even equalled, in any literature. As probably our greatest contemporary poet puts it:

Never since bright earth was born
In rapture of the enkindling morn,
Might godlike wrath and sunlike scorn
 That was and is,
And shall be while false weeds are worn,
 Find word like his;

or as another says:

With shattering ire or withering mirth
He smote each worthless claim to worth,

The barren fig-tree cumbering earth
 He would not spare,
 Through ancient lies of proudest birth
 He drove his share.

He saw 'tis meet that Man possess
 The will to curse as well as bless,
 To pity—and be pitiless,
 To make and mar ;
 The fierceness that from tenderness
 Is never far.

XX.

Dunbar's reputation rests largely on his work as a satirist ; but in that respect he certainly cannot be compared to Burns. In his professed condemnation of the evils he exposes he makes little or no use of his gift of humour, and his indignation is of the tepidest. No doubt he records unsparingly the gross immorality of prelate and priest in his day ; and the fact that he, himself an ecclesiastic, could do so with impunity is a striking testimony to the degraded condition into which the ancient Church had sunk in Scotland in the 15th and 16th centuries. The clergy had manifestly ceased to believe their creed, yet went on deceiving the people by pretending to believe. What fate could such false lives have, except to sink into the sensual ? Like priest, like people ; and the licentiousness by which the popular life and literature of Scotland have been stained is traceable, among other causes, to clerical dishonesty. Dunbar, however, does not attack the evil at its root. The Church, in that case, would have had him in its grasp. His tongue, in short, was paralysed, both as regards Church and State. He wanted preferment in the Church, and to that end had to play the courtier. Probably *The Thistle and the Rose*, a sort of political epithalamium on the marriage of the Scottish king to an English princess, and a highly finished literary effort of its kind, was not written without an eye to its author's advancement in Court patronage, which indeed he did, in a measure, achieve. But such a state of mind goes far to stifle a man's honest indignation at wrong ; and Dunbar's 'General Satire,' though comprehensive enough in its scope, and skilfully expressed in a stanza

very difficult to write in with ease, is really a tame production. It is little more than a rhymed schedule of the national shortcomings, with neither fire nor fury. As for his *Two Married Women and the Widow*, it is difficult to regard it as a satire at all. It looks more as if the writer were gloating over the almost incredible iniquities which he is professedly holding up to condemnation, much as Chaucer may be more than suspected of doing in the *Prologue* and *Tale of the Wife of Bath*. Burns, on the other hand, kept himself free to deal as he thought right with those unveracities in religion and that selfishness in politics from which so vast and so many public evils flow, and his honest anger at what he saw supplied him with irresistible weapons.

Dunbar's *Golden Targe* is justly admired for the ingenuity of its construction, and the art with which, in a complicated strophe, it is ornamented with imagery felicitously adapted from external nature. But it is inferior in power of conception and execution, in relevancy to fact, in moral elevation, in rapidity of word-painting, to 'The Vision' of Burns, the one production of his with which it can be compared. Its object is to delineate the triumph of the sexual passion over the rational nature, how it can overpower the will with its love-bolts notwithstanding the interposition of the 'golden targe' of reason. For this purpose the writer imagines a dream, in which all the bevy of the classic goddesses appear, and discharge arrows at the golden targe in turns, but to no effect, until Beauty returns to the charge, and dust is got into the targe-bearer's eyes—how does not very clearly appear—when he becomes the blind victim of love. The whole plot is an allegory of the impotence of reason—which can resist the attacks of all other tempting influence—in the presence of beauty. It is impossible for the average public to know what the writer is driving at, and even the scholar will not be able very well to see that much light is thrown by the allegory upon the psychology of amorous infatuation. There is certainly nothing like this in Burns. Half his work consists in describing the victories of love over the whole nature of man; but it did not occur to him to employ the allegory, or the rebus, or the puzzle, to help him out with his account of matters. It may be doubted if any one of these devices would have proved successful if inserted into 'A' the airts,' or 'Mary Morison,' or 'The Lass of Ballochmyle,' or

'My Nanie O,' or the 'Rigs o' Barley,' or 'My ain kind Dearie,' or 'Green grow the Rashes,' or fifty others that might be quoted. Dunbar certainly had graphic power. But so had Burns—in the highest degree. He was not a mere man of books, though he knew not a few books thoroughly. His eye had rested often and keenly on nature, on human character and action, and on the specialisms of many occupations; and his work is full of rapid touches derived from this close practical observation, which book-knowledge of itself must inevitably miss. It is no disparagement to the genius and performances of Dunbar to say that in nothing except monkish scholarship, and what it may bring, is he the superior of Burns, while in the broader and higher endowments and achievements of a great poet he falls distinctly behind.

XXI.

What of Scott? It would be the height of injustice and ingratitude to try to belittle the great qualities that went to make up the manhood and the genius of Sir Walter Scott, or to underrate the vast services which his career and work have rendered to his country and the world. He was a man of the most lovable and heroic character, and his writings have been an unqualified joy and an element of inspiration to millions. The noble struggle which he made, through many years, to retrieve his misfortunes is of itself sufficient to prove that, whatever share of blame is attributable to himself, there could be nothing in it of the base or the sordid, while the value to the world of his example is beyond calculation. To speak of the splendour of his constructive imagination, the shrewdness and accuracy of his insight into an extensive department of human character, and his power of reproducing the elements of the humorous and the pathetic that had met his eye, is superfluous. They are matter of universal knowledge throughout the English-speaking and English-reading world. But to a certain extent they are beside the question here, which is, Was Scott a greater poet than Burns? If this were to be decided by the comparative quality of their best rhymed work, there could not be much hesitation about the answer. Scott could not have written 'The Jolly Beggars,' or 'The Holy Fair,' or 'The Epistles' to Smith, Davie, and Lapraik, or 'Holy Willie's Prayer,' or

‘Highland Mary,’ or ‘Tam o’ Shanter,’ or ‘Mary in Heaven,’ or ‘Scots wha hae,’ probably not ‘The Cotter’s Saturday Night,’ and he certainly would not have written ‘A Man’s a Man for a’ that’ even if he could.

It may be said, Neither could Burns have written the ‘Lay of the Last Minstrel’ or ‘Marmion.’ That is probable enough ; but mainly because he would not have thought it worth his pains to try. It has often been noticed that Burns took comparatively little interest in the ballad literature of his country. Scott’s interest amounted to a passion. In this circumstance may be found the key to the difference between the two men. Scott was essentially an antiquary, though not of the Dryasdust species, but a sort of glorified Captain Grose. Burns liked Grose, perhaps loved him—he wrote ‘Tam o’ Shanter’ to oblige him—but he grinned good-naturedly at his ‘routh o’ auld nick-nackets.’ Could he have seen Abbotsford he would have smiled. He could not have troubled himself about William of Deloraine, or Roderick Dhu, or Young Lochinvar, or the rather rascally knight whose last words were ‘On, Stanley, on.’ His interests lay in the present, the actual, the universal ; not in the past, the unreal, the casual. Among his MSS. there is a remarkable one, in which he begins a copy of the ‘Young Tamlane.’ After a page or two he comes abruptly to a stop, as if he had said to himself, ‘What is the good of toiling in dreamland when the Presbytery of Ayr, under the inspiration of hypocrisy and in the interests of falsehood, are persecuting Dr Macgill ; when Pitt is scheming to crush the uprising of liberty in France ; when a verse is wanted to celebrate the charms of lovely Davies ? Adieu, thou young but slightly tedious Tamlane.’ On the other hand, he was never tired collecting the old popular songs, because they expressed universal and ever-living feelings, whereas thieving Armstrongs and tyrannous old feudal chiefs, with their amours and their brutalities, had had their day, and a poor day they had made of it. Perhaps Burns carried this indifference a little too far. *Sunt lacrimæ rerum*, and the ‘dowie dens of Yarrow’ with their melancholy charm and suggestiveness awaken a sentiment which justly claims poetic recognition.

But of the two exaggerations, Scott’s is that which is absolutely fatal to general poetic power and greatness. Whoever has stood

where 'auld ruined castles gray nod to the moon' will sympathise with Scott up to a certain point. Burns himself harked back occasionally to 'heroic Bruce and Wallace,' although probably not so much for the sake of long ago as because they fought for national liberty and independence. But Scott so entirely overdid it, no doubt under the bidding of his nature, that, in his capacity of poet or literary man, he lost interest in the present, if he ever had it, altogether. He became a thorough convert to the doctrine that distance lends enchantment to the view. All his most successful novels, to anticipate for a moment, have a distant scene, either in time or place, or both. He began by putting *Waverley* sixty years back. The things that tore Burns's heart, and drove him to immortal utterance, did not trouble Sir Walter in the least. The wonder of existence did not disturb his peace of mind; give him Melrose Abbey by moonlight. That the Church might be hypocritically teaching the people falsehood did not annoy him at all—he would have been far more concerned about a recent version of Edom of Gordon; and he would have gone ever so many times farther to look at a guaranteed spear-head from the field of the red Harlaw than to see the most beautiful woman of the century. As for the march of popular freedom, he objected to it altogether, and preferred to amuse himself by playing at Feudal Chieftain within his 'romance in stone and lime,' an innocent enough diversion, but not indicative of the widest and noblest sympathies.

Burns was the antithesis to all this. The 'honest man,' the true poet, were his ideals. Falsehood and hypocrisy, especially in quarters to which the people looked for guidance, seemed to him so terrible that he could scarcely control himself. Living beauty raised him to the seventh heaven. The people he knew and saw around him had his sympathies, not dead crusaders or extinct moss-trooping gallows-birds. The progress of humanity was a genuine care to him. The problem of rich and poor moved him profoundly. The marvel and mystery of the world and the life of man ceaselessly weighed upon his spirit, filled him with reverence, and stirred him to inquiry. In short, Burns had more soul in him than Scott, with all his admitted amiabilities. Scott dealt more with the outside of things, Burns penetrated to the core. His spirit was deeper, his view

wider, his emotion intenser, his sympathy more catholic, his sensibility more tender, his affection more glowing, and he could rise to heights of passionate and picturesque utterance which Scott could never reach. Thus, as regards the materials of a lofty poetry, Burns was by much the more fully furnished in resource. As regards its form, Scott is undoubtedly musical—with breaks—within his range; but, with not less facility, Burns has a richer melody, a swifter, more varied, and flashing movement, a fuller moral suggestiveness. But what of Scott's novels? it may be said. Are not they prose poems, and do not the inventiveness, the prolific imagination, the exuberance of delineative effect, which they display raise Scott above the level of Burns, who showed scarcely any inventive power, and whose literary productiveness was comparatively scanty?

XXII.

This, however, might prove too much. It might prove that Scott was also greater than Homer. *Waverley* alone is probably more complicated and bigger than the *Iliad*. Plainly, there is something wrong here. Is there really such a thing as a 'prose poem'? The sense of the world says No. Nobody speaks of Fielding and Richardson, of Dickens and Thackeray, of Hardy and Du Maurier, as poets. People call them novelists, and their work romance or fiction. In poetry the world demands music. The poet must be a singer. He may be as great a thinker, as brilliant a delineator, as he likes; if he cannot sing his thoughts or delineations so as to make them musically charming, he is not a poet. Prose admits of a certain rhythm or cadence, but so infinitesimal as not to count. If overdone, it wrecks the prose without making it poetry. Dr Johnson's prose was rhythmical. It was also intolerable. The test which the world prescribes for the writer whom it is asked to dub poet, as far as form goes, is that he shall have some stanza to which he adheres, and that in that stanza he shall write as easily as if he were writing adequate prose. If the stanza evidently hampers him, makes him repeatedly invert sentences, bring in unnecessary or unapt words, throw the conclusions of one line too often into the beginning of another, and adopt other devices to square his expression with his meaning, which he

would not use in prose, the musical flow is broken, the work becomes more or less unpoetical. Take as illustration :

Opening of 'Lady of the Lake.'

The stag at eve had drunk his fill,
Where danced the moon on Monan's rill,
And deep his midnight lair had made
In lone Glenartney's hazel shade ;
But, when the sun his beacon red
Had kindled on Ben Voirlich's head, &c.

Opening of 'Tam o' Shanter.'

When chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neibours neibours meet,
As market-days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak' the gate ;
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
An' getting fou and unco happy, &c.

In the Scott quotation there is only one line that is not thrown out of arrangement by inversion, in Burns there is only one that is. Hence, whatever may be thought of the contrasted pictures, there is a sense of effort in the one case and of ease in the other—and ease is characteristic of most of Burns's best writing, making the music of his verse perfect.

Strictly speaking, then, Scott's novels should be left out of account in estimating his exact poetic standing. But suppose we admit them as prose drama. Considerations then arise, bearing on the wider aspect of our question, but which may as well be taken now. Is dramatic inventiveness one of the essential notes of a great Poet? If so, it is surprising how widely it seems to be distributed. Counting novelists, playwrights, and the like, there must have been a thousand second Scotts, who were as good plot-makers as their master or better; but there has been no second Burns. The truth is, if dramatic constructiveness is to be held a poetic quality at all, we must distinguish between two orders of poets, the prophet-poet and the showman-poet. The prophet-poet speaks to us directly, teaches us in his own person. The showman-poet fabricates a collection of puppets, like the 'moral wax figures' of Artemus Ward, through which he speaks like the proprietor in the street-show of Punch and Judy. He

addresses us, in fact, not as a fellow-being but through speaking machinery. Of course there is an interest in seeing what human resemblance there is in the automata, and with what *vraisemblance* as regards speech and action they behave towards each other, and what poetry there may be in what they actually say; but the main point is, what the unseen constructor and worker of the exhibition is ultimately teaching ourselves. Can he make his figures convey a loftier impression or lesson to us than there is in himself? The question answers itself. If Burns, in the prophetic attitude, has a higher message for us and a greater power of commanding our attention than Scott in the same attitude, the latter cannot alter the facts of nature by interposing a show, however ingeniously and admirably got up, between us and himself. That may be said without disparagement of the art shown in moulding the figures from real life or in making the *dramatis personæ* act and react on each other. But Burns too could sculpture from the life with unerring accuracy of representation. In particular he has set forth for us a life-like effigy of himself; and from *Waverley* to *Castle Dangerous* there is not a character so striking as Burns in the whole of Scott's crowded and brilliant gallery.

XXIII.

If we must thus set Burns above Dunbar and Scott, it is scarcely worth saying that we must put him very much higher than any other Scottish poet of note—Semple of Beltrees, Hamilton of Gilbertfield, Allan Ramsay, Fergusson, Hogg, Tannahill, Motherwell. Burns, of course, owed much to his predecessors. They left him a considerable inheritance both of poetical material and of poetical form. For centuries before he appeared there had been a native school of poetry of no little activity. The tradition is that James I., in his captivity in England, while fully acquainted with the Lowland Scotch or Northern English, which was the Court and legal language, had been a student of Chaucer; and that when he returned to Scotland to assume the duties of the throne he sought to introduce some of the literary culture he had acquired in England, and wrote 'The King's Quair,' attempting the grammatical forms of the southern rather than the northern English, and thus exhibiting an artificial dialect probably never

so spoken anywhere. Besides this, he wrote the 'Ballad of Good Counsel' strictly in the Scottish dialect, and probably more which has not come down. The humorous sketches entitled 'Peebles to the Play' and 'Christ's Kirk on the Green' have also been attributed to him; but there is much to be said for assigning them a somewhat later date. In any case they belong, in language and spirit, to that Scottish School of Poetry which the royal singer rather than Barbour, who was more of a rhyming historian than an epoch-making poet, may, with probability, be said to have founded, and which, in its earlier history, included such names as Henryson, Dunbar, Douglas, the long and widely popular Lyndsay, and Montgomery, many of whom made frequent use of the highly-musical seven-lined stanza of the 'Quair,' borrowed by its author from Chaucer, whose inventiveness, stimulated by French and Italian influences, had applied it, as in the 'Prioress's Tale' and others, to vary the metres of his Canterbury collection. An essential note of this Scottish school was its realism. It found much of its materials in the actual. 'The King's Quair' is substantially a history of the rise, causes, and course of his love for his Queen. 'Peebles to the Play' and 'Christ's Kirk' deal with recognisable localities, and describe the partly merry and partly riotous conduct of the people of the district in celebrating certain holiday festivities. Much of the poetry of the writers named is of this realistic order. During the 17th century this Scottish school slumbered, despite the efforts of the Semples of Beltrees and one or two minor writers to keep it awake; Drummond of Hawthornden does not count, as he endeavoured to write southern court English. For good or for evil, the public attention and the active intellect of Scotland were absorbed by ecclesiastical controversy. In the 18th century the Scottish school revived. It was one of the effects of the Union that many literary Scots, like Drummond, sought to write in the southern English of what was now the British court. Others, however, preferred the northern 'Inglis' of Dunbar and Lyndsay, although it had fallen from the standing of a court and official language into that of a somewhat despised vernacular. Watson and Allan Ramsay, by the republication of a considerable amount of the old literature, including the principal work attributed to or certainly done by James I., Dunbar, Henryson, Lyndsay, and

others, gave a great impetus to composition in the old Scotch spirit, language, and form.

Ramsay did more. Although he tried to work on the lines of Pope, he felt more at home in his native speech. He edited 'Christ's Kirk on the Green,' adding two cantos of his own, in the kindred Scotch of his day, with a slight terminal variation of the stanza. Much other Scotch song and general poetry flowed from his pen, notably the Scotch pastoral of the *Gentle Shepherd*, a successful endeavour to substitute realism in language and incident for the artificial and borrowed pastoralism of Pope, and, curiously enough, suggested to Ramsay by the discussions of a knot of English critics who urged a return to nature in this department of poetry. Ramsay cannot be called, in any sense, a poet of a high order, although he had an eye for the comicalities of human life, as Burns accurately recognised when he, quite unnecessarily, expressed his longing for 'a spunk o' Allan's *glee*.' But Ramsay did an important work, both as editor and as author, by perpetuating the realism and naturalism of the old Scottish school. He was preparing the way for Burns and the revolution which Burns, with Cowper as his pioneer and Wordsworth and Byron as his successors, wrought in English poetry. But this did not come immediately. It was Fergusson, apparently, who was the direct connecting link between Burns and the traditional school. Fergusson, Burns's senior by nine years, made the acquaintance of Ramsay's and other collections and productions, and, in addition to English verses, wrote in the realistic spirit of the Scottish school, adopting and modifying its characteristic stanza. Burns rightly admired Fergusson more than he did Ramsay, although for both he entertained a generous regard beyond their merits, considerable though these were, and declared it in emphatic terms in the preface to his first edition, where he acknowledges having 'kindled at their flame,' while disclaiming anything in the nature of 'servile imitation.'

XXIV.

One great service Ramsay and Fergusson, and less directly, because less ably, Hamilton of Gilbertfield, rendered to Burns. They introduced him to the spirit and resources of the traditional

Scottish school, and in their original work furnished him with suggestions and starting-points for the execution of his own. If Burns required any encouragement to adhere to his chosen method of following Nature—which Pope would have already taught him by precept if not by example—and of seeking his materials in the realities of his own experience, he would find it in the Scottish school. James I., its real founder, assuming his authorship of the ‘Quair,’ both there and in ‘Peebles to the Play’ and ‘Christ’s Kirk on the Green,’ or whoever wrote these two latter pieces, reproduced feelings and facts which were part of his own personal experience, and succeeded in stamping his method on the school he created, since, from his own day down to Ramsay and Fergusson, his successors found their themes rather in the realities of their own history than in the inventions of their fancy. In the *Gentle Shepherd*, Ramsay no doubt invents the incidents and the characters, but the language and the customs reproduced are those of the actual rustic life of Scotland at the time. The ‘Hallowfair’ and ‘Leith Races’ of Fergusson, which gave Burns suggestions for ‘Hallowe’en’ and the ‘Holy Fair,’ were actual and annual events which Fergusson had repeatedly seen.

In another important respect the Scottish school was of service to Burns. It provided him with metres ready to his hand. He had not to go through the drudgery of inventing, he had only to select. The four-accent couplet of the ‘Twa Dogs’ and ‘Tam o’ Shanter’ had been employed by the Scottish school, and by none more effectively than by Ramsay himself, being possibly taken by them, not from Barbour’s ‘Brus,’ but from Chaucer’s ‘Romaunt of the Rose,’ or what they believed to be such, although he in his turn derived it from elsewhere. The stanza of the ‘Holy Fair’ is taken from Fergusson, and has a curious history. It is visibly traceable to ‘Christ’s Kirk on the Green,’ of which the opening stanza is :

Was never in Scotland heard nor sene
 Sic dancing nor deray,
 Nouthir at Falkland on the Grene
 Nor Peebles at the Play,
 As wes of wowaris as I ween
 At Christis Kirk on ane day,

revelry

woovers

Thair cam our kitties weschen clean girl-romps
 In their new kirtillis of grey,
 Full gay,
 At Christis Kirk on the grene that day.

There is a heavy demand here on the poet's stock of rhymes, and so Ramsay seems to have thought; for, in continuing the poem, he made the refrain less exacting, although he left the writer's responsibilities otherwise the same. Thus the first stanza of Ramsay's Canto II. is:

But there had been mair blood and scaith,
 Sair hardship and great spulie,
 And mony a ane had gotten his death
 By this unsonsie tooily. ungentle struggle
 But that the bauld goodwife of Baith
 Arm'd wi' a great kail gully cabbage-knife
 Cam' bellieflaught and loot an aith like a bird of prey with
 outspread wings
 She gar them a' be hooly made quiet
 Fou fast that day.

Fergusson evidently thought that the stanza still took too much out of the poet, and instead of two he allowed himself four rhymes during the eight lines, as in 'Hallowfair:'

Here country John in bonnet blue,
 And eke his Sunday claes on,
 Rins after Meg, wi' rokely new,
 And sappy kisses lays on.
 She'll tauntin' say, 'Ye silly coof! noodle
 Be o' your gab mair spairin.' talk
 He'll tak the hint and creish her loof grease her palm
 Wi' what will buy her fairin'
 To chow that day. chew

This is exactly the stanza of the 'Holy Fair,' and 'Hallowe'en' with 'that night' for 'that day,' and, with the refrain omitted, of various other pieces. The complicated fourteen-line stanza of the first 'Epistle to Davie,' of the introductory and certain other recitatives of 'The Jolly Beggars,' 'Despondency,' 'To the Goodwife of Wauchope,' and several more of Burns's poems, is taken direct from Montgomery's 'The Cherry and the Slae,' and is used also in Ramsay's 'Vision,' where Burns found a hint for the

supernatural figure in his own 'Vision.' The metre of 'Meeting Lord Daer' and other pieces is Chaucerian, filtered through Dunbar and the Scottish school. The stanza which Burns used most frequently, however, was that of 'To a Mouse:'

But Mousie thou art no thy lane
In proving foresight may be vain !
The best-laid schemes o' mice and men
Gang aft a gley
And lea'e us nought but grief and pain
For promised joy.

This stanza aims at combining or contrasting repose and rapidity. In the stanza of 'Christ's Kirk' there is restless and even jerky movement. In the course of its ten lines the succession of an eight-syllabled by a six-syllabled line is repeated four times; then the six-syllabled is succeeded by a two-syllabled line. That is, the measure makes four quick steps and a bound in the course of ten sections of movement; in other words, it is, more than half, a rush. Such a stanza is obviously fitted best for one class of subjects. In the 'Mouse' stanza, on the other hand, the measure advances at an equable rate through three eight-syllabled lines, then quickens its pace through four syllables to get on to the old eight-syllabled ground, and with another four-syllabled quick step gets into the preliminary eight-syllabled expanse of the next stanza. There is no bolting or leaping, but provision is made for a sedater or more reflective attitude, which can, however, be changed into quick movement whenever swiftness is desired.

Whoever invented it, this stanza was first prominently employed in the Scottish school by Lyndsay, and was selected by Robert Semple of Beltrees as the vehicle for that form of humour which consists in writing Elegies on persons who are still living. His son, Francis Semple, adapted it to humorous subjects generally. Hamilton of Gilbertfield found that it suited the variety incident to the Epistle. Ramsay and Fergusson used it for any purpose, and from them Burns took it, observing that it fitted many poetic moods, from the gravity of didactic allocution on through the humorous to the fiery haste of passion. All this was, of course, a considerable help to Burns, taking no small trouble off his hands. But he amply repaid it by the power and dazzling felicity with

which he rendered the results of the Scottish school's method and spirit in the various forms which its activity had created or assimilated during a busy and prolific past. Nor was that the only aid which Burns received from his predecessors. Suggestions of subjects, plans of treatment, thoughts and phrases, whole introductory verses even, were unhesitatingly appropriated by Burns, and worked up or worked out by him, in his own way, and to the result he desired to achieve. Thus Ramsay's 'Nanie,' his 'Lang Syne,' his 'Corn Rigs,' his 'Vision,' suggested Burns's productions of the same names. Fergusson suggested even more than Ramsay. His 'Farmer's Ingle' moved Burns to write the 'Cotter's Saturday Night,' his 'Plainstones and Causey' the 'Twa Brigs,' his 'Caller Water' 'Scotch Drink,' his 'Hallowfair' 'Hallowe'en' (at least as regards title and metre), his 'Leith Races' the 'Holy Fair,' where Burns explicitly adopts Fergusson's personification of 'Mirth' as his chosen companion for the spectacle, just as Fergusson himself was stimulated by the rattling description of 'Christ's Kirk on the Green,' as edited by Ramsay. Even Hamilton of Gilbertfield was laid under contribution by Burns, his 'Last Dying Words of Bonny Heck'—a favourite dog—leading to the 'Death and Dying Words of poor Mailie' and 'Mailie's Elegy.' His finest songs were often perfected versions of very imperfect originals; while ingenious literary detectives have found in Burns touches reminiscent of Pope, Goldsmith, Thomson, Gray, Shenstone, Blair, Young, and almost every writer whom Burns ever read, and some whom he never could have read at all.

XXV.

Many writers would not have done this, because it might expose them to charges of plagiarism and impair their reputation for originality. There was none of this weak vanity about Burns. He was not thinking of himself or his reputation at all. He thought of nothing but his ideas and how best to present them to the world. He could not create his own inspirations. They must arise within him, coming up from the depths of his own being, or given him from without, by the facts of Nature, understood in the sense that makes poets a part of Nature. It never occurs to Burns that he should not use

whatever materials lie nearest to his hand for the purpose of bodying forth the new and original conception that has come to him. He knows that he is not going to repeat another man's idea, but to exhibit a fresh one of his own. What he is concerned about is the realisation, in a poetical structure, of the form which has been born in his imagination; where the stone and lime he rears it with have come from does not, in his view, much signify. Hence, wherever Burns has borrowed he has improved on what he has taken, or rather he has transfigured it altogether, and raised it from mediocrity or failure to the rank of participation in a great poetic triumph. Compare Ramsay's 'Nanie,' or 'Lang Syne,' or 'Corn Rigs,' or 'Vision,' with Burns's; or compare Fergusson's 'Hallowfair,' or 'Leith Races'—better work than Ramsay's—with Burns's 'Hallowe'en' and 'Holy Fair;' take scores of the old songs transformed by Burns into things of beauty, humour, or tenderness, and compare them as they were before and after passing through his hands; it will be seen that the difference is well-nigh that between abortion and Apollo. One could almost imagine that Burns, in regret that so much good material had been wasted, had taken it and converted it into the forms of which it was capable and ought to have assumed.

And it is not merely that power has replaced feebleness of execution; poetry is enabled to discharge its mission of conveying passion, sympathy, or moral impressiveness. Fergusson's 'Hallowfair' deals merely with the external, with the oddities and amusing features of popular activity as displayed in the scene it pictures. In 'Hallowe'en' Burns deals with the heart of the people and the weird beliefs still lingering in the darker recesses of their minds; and the impression left is not that of mere condescending amusement, but of sympathy with the side of human nature to which we are introduced. In 'Leith Races,' again, Fergusson merely dishes up the eccentricities and drolleries of the actors and spectators, 'Mirth' being avowedly the sole companion he seeks in the demonstration. But in the 'Holy Fair' Burns has an eye for the two additional figures of 'Superstition' and 'Hypocrisy' as well as 'Fun,' and so the poem, instead of resting merely on the plane of the ludicrous, soars into a powerful and picturesque satire upon the falsehood in religious thought and action that insults reason and corrupts conduct.

And here it is that we find a vital difference between Burns and the Scottish school generally. Burns never forgets the reverence due to humanity. The key struck in the 'Twa Dogs' is never changed. On the other hand, 'Peebles to the Play' and 'Christ's Kirk on the Green,' with the imitations of them by Ramsay and by Fergusson deriving through Ramsay, are content to extract diversion out of the people, to make game of them for the amusement of their 'betters,' and are to that extent contemptuous of the mass of humanity. But that is not the lesson of the 'Twa Dogs' or 'Hallowe'en,' and above all it is not the lesson of 'The Jolly Beggars.'

Here is a picture entirely in the realistic spirit and on the traditional lines of the Scottish school, in a sense an imitation of 'Peebles' and 'Christ's Kirk' and Ramsay's and Fergusson's sketches of popular life, only executed with a power that dwarfs every other artist into insignificance. But it has not been painted for the amusement of the onlooker. Indeed, the average dweller amid the conventionalities and the respectabilities shrinks from it as a revolting spectacle. But persons of more heart and larger calibre can see in it something that attracts, something that appeals to their deepest and best human instincts. The poet forces us to feel a certain respect for those lawless ragamuffins who have the courage—call it a sinister courage if you will—to assert themselves against the world, and cry :

A fig for those by law protected,
Liberty's a glorious feast ;
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

The whole effect, indeed, is a triumph of poetic power of the highest and finest order, constraining, as it does amidst seemingly insurmountable difficulties, every mind of adequate discernment and sensibility to realise that nothing that is human, however distasteful to the ordinary and average type of nature, is alien to that catholic sympathy which, whether moved by love or pity, breaks through every artificial limitation that it may clasp the race in its comprehensive embrace. It was this power of everywhere seeing the universal in the particular that placed Burns on a higher and special eminence of his own. He entered the Scottish school like a great sculptor entering his studio, where pupils or apprentices

or understudies have been blocking out work with a view to his coming. Their results are not without merit, especially the merit of preparation, yet they do not satisfy the ideal. With half an hour of his chisel the master transmutes the well-aimed or half-successful attempts into perfect achievement. And such was Burns in his relation to his predecessors. They were his auxiliaries and foreworkers, but not his artistic equals. He stands by himself, supreme, without a peer.

XXVI.

The considerations that lead to the recognition of Burns as the greatest poet and one of the greatest men of his country go far to determine also his position among the great poets of the world. Here it has been rather the fashion in certain quarters to do what can be done to keep Burns out of the front and even the second row. The well-spring of his genius, it is said, though its yield is pure and sparkling, is but 'a little Valclusa fountain' after all. He may be unsurpassed as a song-writer, but he must not be named beside Homer and Dante, Shakespeare and Milton, Molière and Goethe. He wants their majesty. Neither must he be ranked with Chaucer, Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Browning, Tennyson, and the like, because he lacks the philosophic subtlety of one moiety of them, and the ornate beauty of the other. To ask a place for him in the loftiest rank, within the poetic Pantheon, might at first raise a smile. But it must not be forgotten that these Masters lived out their lives amid poetic surroundings, with ample time to bring out all that was in them, and, as a consequence, a vastness and volume of work stands to their credit in the ledger of fame that dwarfs the scantier performance of Burns by its affluence of poetic power. But Burns had not their chances. His days were cut short, his purposes were delayed or frustrated, and it was only a few hours that he could rescue for poetry out of a sore and squalid battle with poverty. We can only conjecture what he might have become, and marvel that he did so much. Besides, as has already been said, we must continually be on our guard against being imposed upon by bulk and sound. We must consider quality as well. The trombone and the big drum can drown the

violin and the flute; but the latter in the hands of a master can give out the more exquisite music when they get a chance of being heard. It was with those finer instruments that Burns worked, and he has done things with them, isolated perhaps and not large to look at, but which some of the Masters could not have done at all, and none of them could have done better. Of course, this must be understood of Burns at his best; for there is much inferior work mixed up with his masterpieces, especially among the matter whose publication was not authorised, and indeed virtually forbidden by him, and no one knew it better than himself. But he does not stand alone here. An apology is wanted for mentioning the proverbial nodding of Homer; but even Shakespeare has passages of downright bombast, and not seldom piles on fancies and beauties that are superfluous and disturb the poetic aim.

Wordsworth has remarked on Goethe's want of 'inevitableness,' but he has no such criticism to make on Burns, for whom as a master of his craft, and even as a man, he speaks in terms of the most unstinted admiration, and to whom he was, by the consent of his own greatest admirers, and indeed avowedly, indebted deeply, in regard both to material and style. The strength of Burns was that his work was 'inevitable.' 'My passions,' he says of his earlier days, 'when once they were lighted up, raged like so many devils till they got vent in rhyme; and then conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet.' It was the same all through:

Just now I've ta'en the fit o' rhyme,
My barmie noddle's working prime,
My fancy yerket up sublime,

Wi' hasty summon:
Hae ye a leisure-moment's time
To hear what's comin'?

Or it might be:

But how the subject theme may gang,
Let time and chance determine;
Perhaps it may turn out a sang,
Perhaps turn out a sermon.

In this respect Burns had an enormous advantage over even the greatest poets. His work was not concocted. It was inspired. His own nature forced it on him. A call came to him higher

than his own will, and he was merely nature's editor, happy in this, that his own laborious study and practice had equipped him with a facile and felicitous mastery of language which formed a ready vehicle for the fiery message fresh born within his spirit. Many of the greater poets, however, must have done much of their greatest work quite wilfully. Dante's highest merit is not spontaneity. Goethe must have set about the construction of *Faust* very deliberately; and accordingly it is not surprising to find a critic, who is certainly not backward in Goethe's praise, saying of Burns's 'Jolly Beggars,' an effort inspired by the occasion, that 'it has a breadth, truth, and power which make the famous scene in Auerbach's cellar, of Goethe's *Faust*, seem artificial and tame beside it, and which are only matched by Shakespeare and Aristophanes.' Milton clearly went to work of set purpose. He cannot have felt a genuine call to 'justify the ways of God to men,' at all events in the particular case to which he addressed himself, otherwise he could scarcely have failed so completely of his object and won the world's everlasting sympathy for Satan as his real hero. Nay, Shakespeare himself must often have written less at the call of nature than of the manager of the Globe Theatre, although his fancy seems to have fallen in with his task in equal readiness and fertility. But even among those Titans of song Burns has a uniqueness of attitude that commands attention. He is the creation of nature, the instantaneous embodiment of the immediate afflatus. His message is straight from the deepest source of truth and beauty, and therefore original. Moreover, he speaks to us, not at us through dramatic or allegorical machinery, and of realities that have an intense interest for us, and not of invented circumstances and artificial sentiments.

Mention has been made of Wordsworth's eulogy of Burns; not less emphatic is Byron's. He is speaking of Pope's position in literature, and he adds: 'It is no more than has been asserted of Burns, who is supposed "to rival all but Shakespeare's name below." I say nothing against this opinion. But of what "*order*," according to the poetical aristocracy, are Burns's poems? There are his *opus magnum*, "Tam o' Shanter," a tale; "The Cotter's Saturday Night," a descriptive sketch; some others in the same style: the rest are songs. So much for the *rank* of his *productions*; the *rank* of *Burns* is the very first of his art;' and in 'Don Juan' Byron brackets

him with Shakespeare, Bacon, Titus, Cæsar, and Cromwell; the fact that it is in respect of 'pranks' in no way detracting from the significance of the classification. There can be little doubt that Burns exercised a great influence in the poetic making of Byron, if not in his earlier at all events in his later development, and that the direct realism and fearless self-revelation of Burns confirmed Byron in those qualities which have led the most eminent of our living poets to point out 'sincerity and strength' as the characteristic features of the later poet's work. When this is taken in connection with the admitted fact of his influence on Wordsworth, it supplies very strong indirect evidence of the power that was in Burns. Probably no poets of the century have done more to make the century's poetry what it is than Wordsworth and Byron. Of that poetry, their best is probably that which will live longest, and the master of two such disciples must himself have been great. Not that Burns was the first in point of mere date to inaugurate that return to nature which broke down the eighteenth century artificialism, formed on the model but without the genius of Pope. There was the Scottish school—too weak, however, for effects beyond its own narrow walls. There were realists, sporadically distributed here and there in England. But Cowper and Crabbe would never have swayed Wordsworth and Byron. The force and fire and truly classic form, however, of Burns, and the example of his success in dealing with the materials he found in himself and the actual life around him, told upon those two great and original minds, and through them upon the revolution that was to come over the form and much of the spirit of English poetry.

XXVII.

That Burns did not propound schemes of philosophy or theology after the manner of Wordsworth and Browning is true enough; but possibly it was a correct instinct that led him to feel that rhymed sermonising or metaphysics in blank verse was not poetry, whose function surely lies in the concrete. Had there not been something else and better in Wordsworth and Browning than homiletic versifying, their names would already have been forgotten. That it was not for want of speculative power that Burns deals little in abstract thinking is sufficiently evidenced by his ecclesiastical

satires and the ethical element in his Epistles to Sillar, Lapraik, Smith, and others, to say nothing of his Letters. But he knows the limits which his art prescribes to this vein of thinking, and admits no more than is useful for enriching a poem by apt allusion, without turning it into an essay in either Ontology or Deontology. When he is compared with Chaucer, a more formidable rival is cited. Chaucer, it is said, deals with a wider and a lovelier world, and exhibits a greater wealth of characters in a diction not less easy and picturesque. But Burns's characters are more striking, his force and fire and tenderness are greater, and he can rise to heights of passionate utterance inaccessible to the father of English poetry. Chaucer's sketch of the Bailiff is well known :

His lordes sheep, his cattle, his dairy,
His swine, his horse, his stock, and his poultry,
Was wholly in this steward's governing,
And by his covenant gave the reckoning
Since that his lord was twenty years of age.
There could no man bring him in arrearage,
There was no bailiff, no herd, no other hyne,
But that he knew his sleight and his covyne;
They were a-dread of him as of the death.

This is shrewdly done ; but surely Burns works with more vividness, when he says :

I've noticed, on our lord's court-day,
An' mony a time my heart's been wae :
Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,
How they maun thole a factor's snash ;
He'll stamp an' threaten, curse an' swear,
He'll apprehend them, poind their gear,
While they maun stan', wi' aspect humble,
An' hear it a', an' fear and tremble.

When poets of the ornate order, like Keats, Shelley, or Tennyson, come in question, an entirely new point arises. The marvellous beauty of Keats—marvellous not only for his years but in itself—is not in Burns, nor is the peculiar music and rich decoration of Tennyson, or the dogmatic and brilliant Pantheism and transcendental metaphysics of Shelley, continually losing himself among the stars and the universe at large. But neither are they in Homer nor any of the great poets of classic antiquity, nor in Shakespeare in

those highest passages that have placed him on the throne of poetry. The manner of those great singers is that of a severe simplicity, using no more descriptive touches than are needed to make the object of the delineation speak for itself and reveal its own beauty, power, or pathetic impressiveness. The manner of the ornamental school is to crowd the canvas with highly-coloured and shining accessories, dazzling the eye and distracting the mind in search of the central figure. The contrast between the classic and the decorative school is like that between a Greek statue, perfectly chiselled but colourless and nude, and a wax figure carefully tinted, dressed out in the most fashionable glories of Regent Street, and diamonded with all the resources of Hatton Garden. Place them together in a shop-window, and probably more eyes of passers-by would be drawn to the sparkling and exquisitely vested effort in wax; but the 'judicious' would turn to the finished marble. Is it because it works in the cheap wax that the ornate school instinctively depends upon the richness of its 'properties'? It has certainly no wealth of human character, no variety of human situations, to show. Tennyson's most memorable character is probably his 'Northern Farmer,' but that is realism, executed with classic simplicity and no wreaths of rare flowers to distract the eye. Hyperion and Endymion are full of detached beauties; but we cannot find the key to them in our own hearts, and must seek it in the dictionaries of the erudite Smith. Adonais, certainly, has its charm, but one must have graduated in Pantheism to feel its power.

It may be doubted if decorative poetry, in so far as it merely heaps beauty upon the commonplace or the unreal or the monstrous, is a wholesome form of art. Splendid millinery on a splendid form, gorgeous upholstery diffused over a palace, may heighten the general effect; but who would go to see the millinery and upholstery 'on view'? Yet this is not unlike the treat offered by the ornate school. It is told of Keats that he used to pepper his tongue 'to enjoy in all its grandeur the cool flavour of delicious claret.' It is no disparagement of the claret to say that this verged on luxurious indulgence, and the multiplication of beautiful trappings, whose beauty in themselves may be undoubted, but which are out of all proportion to the subject they profess to adorn, looks uncommonly like luxuriance, the beauty-drunkard calling for another goblet when he has had enough. This was not the form of Wordsworth

when he was himself and not merely the unpulpited curate. His form was then severely simple; setting forth a theme, worthy of reproduction, in chosen words sufficient to present it as a whole, neither distracting attention to unessential adjuncts nor suggesting defect by the addition of alien adornment, but trusting solely to that effect of concentrated beauty always yielded by the successful image of an adequate original, in which lies all the magic of genuine art. One of the most competent critics of Wordsworth, appreciative yet discriminating, has said: 'Wordsworth owed much to Burns, and a style of perfect plainness, relying for effect solely on the weight and force of that which, with entire fidelity, it utters, Burns could show him;' and then he quotes the lines beginning 'The poor inhabitant below,' &c., and adds: 'Every one will be conscious of a likeness here to Wordsworth; and if Wordsworth did great things with this nobly plain manner, we must remember, what indeed he himself would always have been forward to acknowledge, that Burns used it before him.'

XXVIII.

The truth is, to compare such a poet as Burns with Keats, or Shelley, or Tennyson is to do injustice on both sides. You might almost as fairly compare him with Titian, or Phidias, or Beethoven. They are different types of artists, and it is about as futile to compare them as it would be to compare a snuff-box with a policeman. The only question that can be asked as between the simple and classic school on the one hand and the ornate and luscious school on the other is, Whether do the classics or the decorators represent the higher and truer form of the poetic art? It is a question for an intellectual jury. A special jury of the minds most trained in poetic experiences will probably decide for the classics; a common jury, representing a larger constituency, will as probably give a verdict for the decorators. There is no appeal. *Chacun à son goût.* Burns happened to belong to the classic school, and in that school stood high, in certain respects the highest. Moreover, he had qualities which most of his fellow-classics lack. Like Shakespeare he saw keenly the humorous side of life, and knew how to hit it off in light and instantaneous strokes. A critic, indeed, who has left a high reputation behind him as a novelist, and

who was by no means friendly to Burns, has felt constrained to say of him: 'His humour comes from him in a stream so deep and easy that I will venture to call him the best of humorous poets.' Then he could not only command the admiration of his peers, but had the secret of making himself appreciated by the mass of mankind. His charm touches at once the highest and the lowest capacity. By unerring instinct he seized a subject of universal interest, or rather the subject seized him. He presented it in a manner of his own not only infinitely attractive but absolutely perspicuous, and distinguished by that brevity which is not only the soul of wit but the token of mastery. So that, while Milton at last becomes wearisome, and even Shakespeare looks a serious undertaking, and the rest are left to the leisured and curious few, Burns is universally welcome, universally intelligible, universally instructive or delightful. Probably no poet of the first rank has ever been more popular, and in the best sense of popularity.

Of the poetry which produced these effects a good deal has already been said incidentally; but something, chiefly in the way of classification and comparison, still remains to be done. By general consent, three of Burns's poems stand out from the rest: 'The Cotter's Saturday Night,' 'The Jolly Beggars,' and 'Tam o' Shanter,' and on the comparative merits of these criticism is much divided. When Burns is spoken of outside Scotland or Scotch circles, it is 'The Cotter's Saturday Night,' with, perhaps, 'Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon' and 'Scots wha hae,' by which he is identified. But 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' is not Burns's supreme poetical success. It is, however, a great, though unequal, effort, and might have looked greater had not Burns habituated us elsewhere and otherwise to work of more masterly character. In the selection of the topic Burns showed his usual felicity and the universality of his sympathies. The triumph of a simple piety and morality over poverty—a motive far transcending that of Fergusson's 'Farmer's Ingle,' from which probably a suggestion was taken—was so striking a feature in the Scottish peasant life of the day that Burns could not have fulfilled his purpose of 'singing the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and his rustic compeers' had he omitted to make use of it. The failures of the piece have been traced to various causes, to the unaccustomed metre, to the fact that 'the world of the "Cotter's Saturday Night" is not a beau-

tiful world.' The allegation is certainly untrue. The beauty may not be the beauty of the Bay of Naples, or the beauty of a full-dress dinner at Willis's rooms, or an aristocratic dance in Mayfair; but religion and virtue, rising superior to misfortune and hardship, have a beauty and even sublimity for those who possess sufficient width of vision. Besides, it should be remembered that an artistic image of anything is by itself beautiful, if properly executed. Was Caliban beautiful? Was Falstaff? Is Pandemonium? Yet these are usually reckoned Shakespearian and Miltonic triumphs. Was the death-struggle of Laocoon beautiful? It was horrible; but in marble it is an artistic treasure.

The weakness in 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' comes not from its subject but from a certain falsetto tone into which Burns, contrary to his own nature, knowledge, and habit, felt himself driven. The piety of 'The Cotter's Saturday Night' is an uneducated and unenlightened piety. Burns was neither uneducated nor unenlightened; but, for reasons, he strives to squeeze himself into sympathy and identity with that state of things, and he incurs the penalty of occasionally degenerating into mere 'goody-goody.' Then he becomes aggressive in defence of cottage-life:

What *Aiken* in a cottage would have been;
Ah! though his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween!

'Aiken' probably did not thank him for his good wishes, and Burns himself was, rightly enough, anxious to rise above the cottage position. Then he alleges that

In fair Virtue's heavenly road
The cottage leaves the palace far behind,

and says some very hard things about a 'lordling's pomp,' which he lived to correct after he had met Lords Daer and Glencairn. Not satisfied with all this, he attacks 'Italian trills' as having 'nae unison with our Creator's praise,' and as being much inferior to the well-known Scottish Church tunes respectively called 'Dundee,' 'Martyrs,' and 'Elgin.' Now, Burns must have known that the Catholic sacred music is at least as good as the Presbyterian.

How are we to account for these uncharacteristic narrownesses and unveracities? The reasons are plain and not dishonouring to Burns. First, he felt, and not wrongly, that the life of the Scottish

poor, to whom he belonged, was undeservedly despised by too many of the more fortunate. He would assert its title to respect; and if in doing so he sometimes struck out wildly—why, the laws of battle must not be too nice. Next, ‘The Cotter’s Saturday Night’ was drawn from actual scenes in his father’s house, and there was no human being—probably no being at all—whom in his heart of hearts Burns loved and revered more than his father. He had, of course, rapidly outgrown his father’s thoughts—although Burns’s father was anything but a weak-minded man; but for that father’s honour he would sacrifice a part of his poetic prerogative and duty, and force himself into corners of faith too tight for his bulk. These concessions, however, have, to their extent, marred the poem; but where Burns feels himself free he is as strong as ever. There are passages in ‘The Cotter’s Saturday Night’ which he nowhere excels. Here, despite the heavy armour of the, perhaps, unfortunately chosen Spenserian stanza, he moves easily, and rises when needful to the befitting heights on a wing of power. The outburst beginning, ‘Oh! happy love!’ the references to the ‘big ha’ Bible,’ especially to John’s vision in Patmos, and the concluding patriotic stanzas are in his best manner, while the half-humorous episode of Jenny and her rustic lover are charmingly managed.

It is worth observing that these passages are written, not in the broad Scotch of the first half of the poem, but in English, into which Burns often glided, especially when he had to express feeling, not of a local character, but common to all. It is often affirmed that Burns failed when he tried to write English. In certain cases, no doubt, he did, just as in certain other cases he failed when he wrote Scotch. But ‘Mary in Heaven’ is in English, and of its kind it is probably unsurpassed in English literature. So also are ‘Man was made to mourn;’ the impassioned stanzas on the ‘Wounded Hare,’ so characteristic of Burns’s sympathy with the dumb creation; the ‘Ode to the Memory of Mrs Oswald,’ which Carlyle rightly calls ‘a piece that might have been chanted by the Furies of Æschylus;’ the highest passages, whether descriptive or reflective, in ‘Tam o’ Shanter;’ the most exquisite half of the ‘Mountain Daisy;’ the powerful and unique ‘Macpherson’s Farewell,’ except two words not requiring translation; ‘Had we never loved so kindly’ almost entirely; ‘Afton Water;’ the ‘Song of Death;’ the pathetic

lyric beginning 'The gloomy Night is gathering fast,' down even to the word 'bonnie,' which is Shakespearian; the substance of 'Scots wha hae' and 'Go fetch to me a pint of Wine;' the whole of 'A Bard's Epitaph,' except a few words in the first stanza; the greater and the most elevated part of 'The Vision;' the touching 'Ode on Despondency,' and others—passages or complete poems—that might be mentioned, proving that if Burns was a great Scotch poet, he was not an indifferent English one. To the same effect we can cite the latter half of the justly-celebrated 'Cotter's Saturday Night,' of which it has to be said finally that, however plain its weaknesses may be to the critical eye, there is nothing that Burns ever wrote that has brought him closer to the hearts and the respect of the masses of the Scottish people, who, divining its high purpose, have not been too keenly on the look-out for blemishes and imperfections, and have been willing to regard it with Wilson as 'the noblest poem genius ever dedicated to domestic devotion,' and to justify Hazlitt in comparing its effect to that produced 'by a slow and solemn strain of music.'

XXIX.

When we come to strike a balance between 'The Jolly Beggars' and 'Tam o' Shanter' we are forced to ask, 'Who shall decide when doctors disagree?' Campbell, Hazlitt, Wilson, Shairp, Burns himself, think 'Tam o' Shanter' his masterpiece; but Arnold, Taine, Carlyle are for 'The Jolly Beggars,' although, for many, Carlyle's judgment may seem discounted by the fact that he thought the poetry of Keats 'consists in a weak-eyed maudlin sensibility, and a certain vague random tunefulness of nature.' Probably the better opinion is, that 'The Jolly Beggars,' on the whole, exhibits the highest triumph Burns ever achieved in the poetic art in the way of strength, and displays a dramatic power—admitted even by Principal Shairp, who is, of course, sadly scandalised by the subject—with which he is not usually credited, and which might have come to something had there been time; although it must not be forgotten that it was apropos of 'Tam o' Shanter' that Scott declared that 'no poet, with the exception of Shakespeare, ever possessed the power of exciting the most varied and discordant emotions with such rapid transitions.' Certainly, in this respect,

'Tam o' Shanter' is a wonderful production, but scarcely less so is 'The Jolly Beggars;' while the latter deals with aspects of human nature of deeper, if wilder and more tragic, interest than the other. Tam and the Souther, Kate, the landlord and the landlady, are all admirably sketched; but the heart which thinks nothing human foreign to it is attracted more powerfully towards these ale-house outcasts, lost to every form of respectability, yet solving the problem of life in a way of their own. One thinks involuntarily of Milton's portraits of his fallen angels, the comparison, however, being to the advantage of Burns, who draws human realities from the life, while Milton's figures are simply the creations of imagination. Side by side with these in point of sheer strength must stand the monograph of 'Holy Willie's Prayer,' a fearless and powerful psychological analysis, tracing the disastrous and depraving effects of a terrible creed on a narrow and uninstructed intellect and weak moral nature, and executed with a dramatic and humorous audacity that has had no parallel, whether as model or imitation. It has been objected to it that it contains elements of coarseness; but was the picture possible without some coarseness? And as Byron justly remarks, 'A man may be *coarse* and yet not *vulgar*, and the reverse. Burns is often coarse, but never *vulgar*.'

But these poems, great though they undoubtedly are, do not reveal the full wealth of genius that was in Burns. He did work of the highest order in almost every conceivable vein of poetic productivity—Satirical, Reflective, Descriptive, Humorous, Passionate, and Tender, in many instances several or all of these qualities being blended in a single effort. Among the 'Satires' the leading place must, of course, be assigned to 'The Holy Fair,' 'The Ordination,' 'The Twa Herds,' 'The Holy Tulyie,' or the 'Epistle to M'Math,' where he says:

O, Pope, had I thy satire's darts
To gi'e the rascals their deserts,
I'd rip their rotten, hollow hearts,
An' tell aloud
Their jugglin' hocus-pocus arts
To cheat the crowd.

All hail, Religion! maid divine!
Pardon a muse sae mean as mine,

Who in her rough, imperfect line
 Thus daurs to name thee ;
 To stigmatise false friends of thine,
 Can ne'er defame thee.

Of a minor character we have 'The Kirk's Alarm,' the New Moon Postscript to the 'Epistle to Simson,' 'The Dedication to Gavin Hamilton,' with its

Morality ! thou deadly bane,
 Thy tens of thousands thou hast slain !
 Vain is his hope whose stay and trust is
 In moral mercy, truth and justice !

No—stretch a point to catch a plack ;
 Abuse a brother to his back ; . . .
 Be to the poor like onie whunstane,
 And haud their noses to the grunstane ;
 Ply every art o' legal thieving ;
 No matter—stick to sound believing !

Learn three-mile prayers and half-mile graces, &c.—

and various pieces, epistolary and other, attacking with the weapon of ridicule the doings of clergy and kirk-sessions.

In these effusions Burns stands up boldly and avowedly as a rebel against the existing theological and ecclesiastical system as presented to his eye, after the fashion of Lyndsay and Buchanan, though with keener vision and freer tongue. As to the literary merits of these satires as a whole there cannot be two opinions. They are simply unsurpassed in any literature for power, point, and picturesque utterance ; while their richness in humour, description of nature and character, quaint but excellent moralising, and even occasional pathos, relieve them from the charge of bitterness or narrowness. Nor was Burns's satire confined to church abuses. 'My tocher's the Jewel,' 'Hey for a lass wi' a tocher,' 'How cruel are the Parents,' and perhaps 'Poortith Cauld' are a protest against the prostitution of love to gain. The 'Address of Beelzebub to the President of the Highland Society on preventing emigration' is, apart from the merits, as scathing a piece of indignant irony as was ever written. The 'Dream' beginning 'Guid mornin' to your Majesty' and containing the famous 'Facts are chiefs that winna ding, and downa be disputed,' satirises the venality and 'snobbishness' of poetic and other parasites, handles royalties and other dignities with

a freedom and veracity to which they are little accustomed, yet in a strain of playful, if sometimes broad, humour which goes far to salve any wound inflicted, and ends with one of those pathetic and genial life-touches with which Burns so often imparts elevation of tone to a whole deliverance :

God bless you a' ! consider nów,
 Ye're unco muckle dautet ;
 But, ere the course o' life be through,
 It may be bitter sautet ;
 An' I ha'e seen their coggie fou,
 That yet ha'e tarrow't at it ;
 But or the day was done, I trow,
 The laggen they ha'e clautet
 Fu' clean that day.

The 'Reflective,' including the moralising and more or less didactic, poems are of course akin in purpose to the satirical. They include most of the Epistles, to Davie, to Lapraik, to Simson, to a 'Young Friend,' to Blacklock, to De Peyster, to Mrs Scott of Wauchope, with 'Despondency,' 'Man was made to mourn,' the 'Address to the Unco Guid,' the 'Bard's Epitaph,' 'Contented wi' little,' and incidental remarks on human life and its problems scattered over poems not dealing avowedly with that theme. What Burns's own plan of life was has already been considered. His general view of life and what to make of it would probably not have satisfied Daddy Auld, but has commended itself nevertheless to many before and since his day. In the pieces mentioned, while expression is given to moods of sadness, there is no pessimism. Be content with the inevitable, fight the difficulties that may be overcome, make the most of the joys the moment yields, aim at a higher mark than mere external success or gain, seek in the mind itself a refuge from care and pain, are some of the main lessons of his teaching when studied as a whole :

Let us cheefu' acquiesce
 Nor make our scanty pleasures less
 By pining at our state.

The heart aye's the part aye
 That makes us right or wrang.

At times he says :

Dame Life, though fiction out may trick her,
And in paste gems and frippery deck her :
Oh ! flickering, feeble, and unsicker
 I've found her still,
Aye wavering, like the willow-wicker,
 'Tween good and ill ;

or again :

Lord help me through this warld o' care,
I'm weary sick o't late and air ;

but that is at once met by :

Come, firm Resolve, take thou the van,
Thou stalk o' earl-hemp in man !

and :

To make a happy fireside clime
 To weans and wife,
That's the true pathos and sublime
 Of human life ;

or in a lighter strain :

I whyles claw the elbow o' troublesome thought,
But man is a sodger, and life is a faught :
My mirth and guid humour are coin in my pouch,
And my Freedom's my lairdship nae monarch dare touch.

At other times he says :

This life has joys for you and I ;
And joys that riches ne'er could buy ;
 And joys the very best.
There's a' the pleasures o' the heart,
 The lover an' the frien' ;

and again :

All blameless joys on earth we find,
And all the treasures of the mind ;

or, becoming more definite :

The war'ly race may drudge and drive,
Hog-shonther, jundie, stretch and strive,
Let me fair Nature's face describe,
 And I, wi' pleasure,
Shall let the busy, grumbling hive
 Bum ower their treasure.

.

Leeze me on rhyme ! it's aye a treasure,
 My chief, amais't my only pleasure,
 At hame, a-fiel', at wark or leisnre,
 The Muse, poor hizzie !
 Though rough an' raploch be her measure,
 She's seldom lazy.

Haud to the Muse, my dainty Davie :
 The warl' may play you mony a shavie ;
 But for the Muse, she'll never leave ye,
 Though e'er sae puir—
 Na, even though limpin' wi' the spavie
 Frae door to door.

If he says :

This life, sae far's I understand,
 Is a' enchanted fairy-land,
 Where pleasure is the magic wand,
 That, wielded right,
 Mak's hours like minntes, hand in hand,
 Dance by fu' light—

he also adds :

Know prudent, cautious self-control
 Is wisdom's root.

That his philosophy of life is not, however, self-centred is abundantly proved by those outbursts of sympathy with human progress, culminating in 'A Man's a man for a' that,' the matchless assertion of man's dignity as man, the chosen hymn of all high-hearted dreamers of a better day, in which they appeal from the injustices of the present to the time that they believe

Is comin' yet, for a' that,
 That man to man the warld o'er
 Shall brothers be for a' that.

As to the poetic rank of Burns's ethical utterances, there is, apart from the merits of 'Despondency' and 'Man was made to mourn,' a fairly general agreement that nowhere does he move more easily and nimbly, or show greater command of the aptest words for the choicest topics than in these Epistles. Where all is so well done, it is difficult to select ; but it is perhaps safe to say that the 'First Epistle to Davie' and the first to Lapraik stand out somewhat from the others, the first because it sets forth a high and true view of life in a complicated metre, whose difficulties are

surmounted without effort, and the other because of the brilliant style in which Burns, in the name of Nature, throws down the glove to the academic and artificial versifiers :

What's a' your jargon o' your schools,
Your Latin names for horns and stools ?

Gie me a spark o' Nature's fire,
That's a' the learning I desire.

XXX.

A 'Descriptive' poet in the usual sense Burns was not. In 'The Vision' he makes Coila, his 'native muse,' say to him :

Thou canst not learn, nor can I show,
To paint with Thomson's landscape-glow.

This was not because he had no delight in Nature. Witness to the contrary the well-known passages beginning :

Oh Nature ! a' thy shows an' forms
To feeling, pensive hearts hae charms !

or :

The sky was blue, the wind was still,
The moon was shining clearly ;

or :

The Catrine woods were yellow seen,
The flowers decayed on Catrine lea,
Nae laverock sang on hillock green,
But nature sickened on the e'e ;

or, as in 'The Vision of Liberty :

The winds were laid, the air was still,
The stars they shot along the sky ;
The fox was howling on the hill,
The distant echoing glens reply.

But Burns was most concerned in Nature's greatest work—Man. Had he ever heard of it, he would have relished keenly Johnson's counsel to stop 'babbling of green fields,' and 'go into Fleet Street and study men.' Besides, Burns's poetry is full of movement, as scarcely any other is. It has to keep pace with human action ; it hastens on from point to point, and has no

poetic time for pulling up and elaborately painting a landscape. It has really better work to do. Hence his Thomsonesque is confined to a few indispensable touches, like the brief but beautiful reference to river and wood in 'Mary in Heaven.' The famous 'spate' scene in the 'Brigs of Ayr,' ending,

Then down ye'll hurl, deil nor ye never rise !
And dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies,

might seem to be exceptional, as it is a long description of Nature ; but then it is from first to last Nature in movement, and made for Burns's manner. In other descriptions—of events and men—his pictures are unsurpassed, often unequalled, for keen observation and graphic rapidity. He sees everything, and he records the essential. Carlyle has, once for all, expounded and illustrated this faculty in 'The Winter Night,' 'The pale moon setting behind the white wave,' the early Scots 'still pressing onwards red-wat shod,' and other vivid effects through briefest touches. What could be more alive than the picture in 'Scotch Drink' of the 'brawnie, bainie, ploughman chiel,' bringing down 'wi sturdy wheel'

The strong forehammer,
Till block an' studdie ring an' reel
Wi' dinsome clamour ?

It was a close observer of the 'roaring play' who wrote :

He was the king o' a' the core,
To guard, or draw, or wick a bore ;
Or up the rink like Jehu roar
In time o' need ;
But now he lags on Death's hog score,
Tam Samson's dead.

It is the same all through. Whatever he has seen, he has seen wholly, and can reproduce unerringly. Human character is sketched as forcibly and accurately as incidents or objects.

'Yon ill-tongued tinkler Charlie Fox' has been often cited as hitting off a great personality in an instant. So, in a minor way :

That slee auld-farran chiel, Dundas ;

or :

Erskine, a spunkie Norlan billie ;

or:

That glib-gabbit Highland baron,
The Laird o' Graham,

or:

Rough, rude, ready-witted Rankine,
The wale o' cocks for fun and drinkin';

or the extemporised sketch of Smellie :

His uncombed grizzly locks, wild-staring, thatched
A head for thought profound and clear unmatched.

Burns's poems, of whatever class, are full of such effective strokes. 'The Jolly Beggars' and 'Tam o' Shanter' abound with them; so do the 'Twa Dogs,' and 'The Vision,' and 'Hallowe'en.' The 'Holy Fair' is not only a satire but a panorama. Even 'Lady Onlie, honest luckie, selling good ale on Shore o' Buckie,' remains in the memory; and in 'Theniel Menzies' bonnie Mary,' surely a gem of its kind, we seem to see Charlie Gregor losing his plaid as

They lap and danced the lea-lang dáy,
Till piper lads were wae and weary.

If the two greater poems referred to take the lead in this excellence, there are many others in which the swift succession of striking word-pictures compels the reader who has made a beginning to go on to the close.

The 'Humorous' element in Burns is so conspicuous and undisputed that it is as needless to insist on it as it would be useless to analyse it, for humour cannot be explained, it can only be felt—by such as have the sense of it. Some critics complain that we have too much of 'Scotch Drink' from Burns; but those who cannot see the humorous exaggerations of 'Scotch Drink' and the 'Earnest Cry' are fitting subjects for the hackneyed 'surgical operation.' Not to speak of the greater poems, in which, excepting 'The Cotter's Saturday Night,' humour is a prominent element, the 'Address to the Deil,' with its profound and prophetic finale, is probably suffused with a richer humour than 'Death and Doctor Hornbook;' but the latter might set up half-a-dozen of our more solemn rhymers for life in this department. The incidental play of humour in the 'Satirical' and 'Reflective' and otherwise classified pieces, especially in the Epistles, is abundant, and of the most effective order. The 'Holy

Fair' and the 'Dream' amuse as they wield the lash, the 'Twa Dogs' as it paints the contrast of rich and poor, and the 'Dying Words' and 'Elegy of poor Mailie' are as humorous as they are tender; while the poet's description of his mental agonies on dining with Lord Daer, the Apostrophes to a 'Haggis' and the 'Tooth-ache,' the 'Epistle to Tennant of Glenconner,' poking fun at Reid and the Philosophy of Common Sense, the 'Inventory,' with 'wee Davoc' and 'Effectual Calling,' the 'Epistle to Hamilton' recommending a boy, 'Captain Grose' and his collection of antiquities, the blend of love and slyness in 'Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad,' 'Duncan Gray,' 'Tam Glen,' 'Guidwife, count the lawin',' 'Indeed will I, quo' Findlay,' 'Oh for Ane and Twenty,' 'Last May a braw Wooer,' 'Gin a body meet (or kiss) a body,' and much else, amply corroborate the strength of Burns in an endowment of which so many of the highest order of poets seem entirely destitute.

XXXI.

When we pass from the more strictly intellectual to the predominatingly emotional poems, we must distinguish between the more fervid or 'passionate' and the more restrained or 'tender.' Love, of course, forms the basis of most of the warmer and 'passionate' utterances. 'The Rigs of Barley,' 'Now westlin' winds,' 'My Nanie O,' 'Green grow the Rashes,' 'The Lass of Ballochmyle,' 'The day returns, my bosom burns,' 'Bonnie Wee Thing,' 'Lovely Davies,' 'My love is like a red, red rose,' 'O May, thy morn was ne'er sae sweet as the mirk night o' December,' 'The gowden locks of Anna,' 'Bonnie Lesley' with its inimitable burst,

To see her is to love her,
And love but her for ever;
For Nature made her what she is,
And never made anither,

along with

Come let me take thee to my breast,
And pledge we ne'er shall sunder;
And I shall spurn as vilest dust
The world's wealth and grandeur,

'Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear,' 'Sae flaxen were her ringlets,'
'By heaven and earth I love thee,' and many others scarcely less

full of fire, show what is meant when it is truly said that Burns reintroduced passion into English poetry. But this energy is not confined to the utterance of love. 'I ga'e mad at their grimaces,' in the M'Math epistle, and 'Inhuman man, curse on thy barbarous art' of the 'Wounded Hare,' are hurled at hypocrisy and cruelty. 'Willie brewed a peck o' maut,' with its artistic *abandon*, is perhaps the finest Bacchanalian song ever written. 'The Memory of Mrs Oswald' is the very height of hate. The love of country and of liberty never found, or could conceivably find, loftier lyric expression than in 'Scots wha ha'e,' as Burns originally wrote it; while, in a minor way, 'Caledonia' and 'Does haughty Gaul' prolong the strain. And where is it possible to find the self-assertion of conscious manhood and the claim of equality more powerfully rendered than in 'A man's a man,' with its

Rank is but the guinea stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that?

But it is really in 'Tenderness' that Burns is greatest. It is a far cry from 'Holy Willie' to 'Highland Mary,' but Burns's boundless sympathies could span the distance. Nothing more sadly sweet was ever written than the lines ending:

O pale, pale now those rosy lips
I aft ha'e kissed sae fondly!
And closed for aye the sparkling glance
That dwelt on me sae kindly!
And mouldering now in silent dust
The heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core
Shall live my Highland Mary.

Next to this we must certainly place 'Mary in Heaven,' both for sentiment and poetic finish. There is not an overstrained feeling or a weak line in either of these unrivalled poems. After them we have an *embarras des richesses*, where it is difficult to select and graduate. 'Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,' most musical, most melancholy, especially in its earlier version, certainly merits the place assigned to it by popular favour. The same may be affirmed of 'Auld Lang Syne,' though not consecrated specially to 'the softer flame.' 'O a' the airts the wind can blaw,' the very blossom of conjugal love, when unprofaned by a clumsy and audacious attempt to eke it out, shows, as well as the elegy on

Matthew Henderson—which is perhaps too laboured, however—that he knew how to animate Nature with his own subjectivity as fully as those more recent poets of physical scenery whom certain critics have thought to possess a monopoly of this accomplishment. Then ‘O wert thou in the cauld blast,’ ‘My Nannie’s awa,’ ‘Ae fond kiss and then we sever,’ ‘John Anderson my Jo,’ ‘Mary Morison,’ ‘The lament for Glencairn,’ with its climax beginning ‘The bridegroom may forget the bride,’ ‘When o’er the hill the eastern star,’ the elegy on ‘Fair Burnet,’ ‘Thou hast left me ever, Jamie,’ the ‘Addresses’ to the Mouse and to the Daisy, ‘Go fetch to me a pint of wine,’ ‘Fare you weel, auld Nickie-ben, O wad ye tak’ a thought an’ men,’ ‘Wat ye wha’s in yon toun,’ ‘A’ is done that men can do, And a’ is done in vain,’ ‘Afton Water,’ ‘The lovely lass of Inverness,’ the different ‘Farewells’ in the prospect of exile, ‘Young Jockey was the blythest lad,’ the ‘Winter Night’ with its cares for the ‘ourie cattle’ and the ‘happin’ bird,’ the ‘Farmer’s salutation to his auld Mare,’ ‘Mailie’s death and Elegy,’ ‘I could wauk a winter’s night, For a sight o’ somebody,’ and much more, reveal a variety of deep, pure, often sad and always serious feeling, conveyed in words almost invariably apt, sufficient, and affecting, for which, of the kind, we seek in vain a parallel elsewhere.

XXXII.

Here surely we may fittingly pause, in wonder at the opulence of varied power there was in this man. There is no phase of human thought or feeling that will not find an outlet in something to which he has given expression in song. It cannot be said, indeed, that everything Burns wrote was a masterpiece. There was much of baffled endeavour and inchoate performance, and even among the efforts that have been singled out there are here and there, perhaps, many wherein words or passages are describable as blurs or flaws. But in every department of poetic effect there are three or four, or half-a-dozen, triumphant achievements that stand on the very pinnacle of perfect Art. The world has endorsed this estimate, and has adopted into its currency of quotation a larger percentage of Burns than of almost any other poet of equal standing and output. Accordingly, in parting from him and his work, we shall do well to

bear in mind that we have been dealing with no common versifier and no ordinary personality. No man of adequate intelligence and sensibility can acquaint himself with Burns, meaning the whole Burns—for here ‘Drink deep or taste not,’ if true at all, is essential—without being at least profoundly moved, stirred to new reflection, and made partaker of a keen and high enjoyment that can be experienced nowhere else in literature; while, in nine cases out of ten, he will feel that he has become wiser, broader, more sympathetic, intellectually more alert, in every way better. And if prowling publishers’ jackals hint to him that this great master of wisdom and beauty sometimes, when he thought he was ‘off duty’ and in confidential circumstances, dipped his hand in the gutter, and moulded artistic figures out of the mud, he may regret that such fingers should have been so soiled; but he will also have become by then able to understand that it was done, not from love of the mud, but through glory in the Art and delight in realising its universal applicability.

That Burns is growing in the respect of the world is simply a visible fact. He is reported to have said, ‘Jean, I’ll be more thought of a hundred years after this than I am now.’ Burns knew what he was, and what he was saying, and his prediction has come true, although even then, and in Dumfries, they did, in a shamefaced way, give him an impressive funeral. And it is safe to say that a hundred years hence he will be more thought of still. By that time the patronising Philistine, and the bourgeois critic, and the malignant detractor with his croak and leer, will have vanished into congenial obscurity. Burns will be able to speak for himself. The splendid essentials of his work and life will stand out in their simple and shapely grandeur, and the world will recognise one of its great men and great benefactors. For the world, as well as his country, owes Burns much. It is something, amidst generations that regard wealth as all in all, or if they take a less ignoble view of life are ready to purchase the prizes of ambition at the price of their own honesty, that a voice like Burns’s, with a power of catching the general ear more widely than most of his compeers, should have compelled attention to a protest that there are greater things in life than wealth or power, and that a high-souled purpose and an honest career are better for a man than degraded

plenty or successful craft. Men will also remember that Burns not only said all this, but that, in the main, he did it—did it amidst circumstances of rough toil, limited means, frequent physical pain and mental anguish, and hope deferred that would have soured and crushed a less heroic spirit. And thus, as time goes on, many that may be drawn at first to Burns for the mere purpose of being amused will go away with a precious jewel of wisdom in their keeping, to be prized and be grateful for while life endures, and will unite with all who have come to understand what a gift Nature sent the world in this generous but meanly-requited child of Genius, in bewailing the hard destiny that caused his sun to go down while it was scarcely noon, that refused to the daring yet patient master-builder the glory of crowning the marvellous ground-structure he had fashioned with the many-pillared and far-seen dome which it was his purpose to rear. *Dis aliter visum.* What can we do but mourn? and dull must be the brain and callous the heart that can refuse the tributary tear to the early tomb of Burns.

CHIEF EDITIONS

OF

LIFE AND WRITINGS OF BURNS.

[KILMARNOCK : 1786.]

Poems, | chiefly in the | Scottish dialect, | by | Robert Burns. | The Simple Bard, unbroke by rules of Art, | He pours the wild effusions of the heart : | And if inspir'd, 'tis Nature's pow'rs inspire ; | Her's all the melting thrill, and her's the kindling fire. | Anonymous. | Kilmarnock : | printed by John Wilson. | M,DCC,LXXXVI.

[EDINBURGH : 1787.]

Poems, | chiefly in the | Scottish dialect. | By | Robert Burns. | Edinburgh : | printed for the author, | and sold by William Creech. | M,DCC,LXXXVII.

[LONDON : 1787.]

Poems, | chiefly in the | Scottish dialect. | By | Robert Burns. | The third edition. | London : | printed for A. Strahan ; T. Cadell in the | Strand ; and W. Creech, Edinburgh. | MDCCLXXXVII.

[EDINBURGH : 1793.]

Poems, | chiefly in the | Scottish dialect. | By | Robert Burns. | In two volumes. | The second edition considerably enlarged. | Vol. I. [II.] | Edinburgh : | printed for T. Cadell, London, and William | Creech, Edinburgh. | M,DCC,XCIII.

[EDINBURGH : 1794.]

Poems, | chiefly in the | Scottish dialect. | By | Robert Burns. | In two volumes. | A new edition, considerably enlarged. | Vol. I. [II.] | Edinburgh : | printed for T. Cadell, London, and William | Creech, Edinburgh. | M DCC XCIV.

[EDINBURGH : 1797.]

Poems, | chiefly in the | Scottish dialect. | By | Robert Burns. | In two volumes. | A new edition, considerably enlarged. | Vol. I. [II.] | Edinburgh : | printed for T. Cadell, *jun.* and W. Davies, London ; | and William Creech, Edinburgh. | MDCCXCVII.

[LONDON : 1800.]

The | works | of | Robert Burns ; | with | an account of his life, | and | a criticism on his writings. | To which are prefixed, | some observations on the character and condition | of | the Scottish peasantry. | In four volumes. 8vo | Vol. I. [II., etc.] | [Vignette] (the dedication is subscribed J. Currie, Liverpool, 1st May 1800.) Liverpool, | printed by J. M'Creery, Houghton-street ; | for T. Cadell, jun. and W. Davies, Strand, London ; | and W. Creech, Edinburgh. | Sold also by Bell and Bradfute, P. Hill, and Manners and Miller. Edinburgh ; | Brash and Reid, and J. Murdoch, Glasgow ; J. Brown, Aberdeen ; W. Boyd, | Dumfries ; J. Morrison, Perth ; J. Forsyth, Ayr ; and by Merrit and | Wright, W. Robinson, W. Harding, and E. Rushton, Liverpool. | 1800.

[LONDON : 1801.]

The | works | of | Robert Burns ; | with | an account of his life, | and | a criticism on his writings. | To which are prefixed, | some observations on the character and condition | of | the Scottish peasantry. | In four volumes. | Vol. I. [II., etc.] | The second edition. | [Vignette], London : | printed for T. Cadell, jun. and W. Davies, Strand ; | and W. Creech, Edinburgh. | Sold also by Bell and Bradfute ; P. Hill, and Manners and Miller, Edinburgh ; | Brash and Reid, and Dunlop & Wilson, Glasgow ; A. Brown, Aberdeen ; W. Boyd, | Dumfries ; J. Morrison, Perth ; J. Forsyth, Ayr ; and by Merritt and | Wright, W. Robinson, W. Harding, and E. Rushton, Liverpool. | 1801. | Printed by R. Noble, in the Old Bailey.

[GLASGOW : 1801.]

Poems | ascribed to | Robert Burns, | the Ayrshire bard, | not contained in any edition of his works | hitherto published. | 8vo | Glasgow, | printed by Chapman & Lang, | for Thomas Stewart, bookseller and stationer. | 1801.

[GLASGOW : 1802.]

Stewart's Edition | of | Burns's poems, | including a number of | original pieces | never before published. | With his | life and character. | Embellished with Engravings. | To which is added, | an appendix, | consisting of his correspondence with | Clarinda, &c. 18mo. Glasgow : | Printed by Niven, Napier and Khull, | For T. Stewart, bookseller, Trongate. | 1802.

Letters | addressed to | Clarinda, &c.—By | Robert Burns, | the Ayrshire poet. | Never before Published. | 12mo. | Glasgow : | Printed by Niven, Napier and Khull ; | For T. Stewart, bookseller, Trongate. | 1802.

[BELFAST: 1806.]

Letters addressed to Clarinda, &c., by Robert Burns. A new edition.
Printed for Archer & Ward, and D. Simms, Belfast, 1806.

[LONDON: 1808.]

Reliques | of | Robert Burns; | consisting chiefly of | original letters,
poems, | and critical observations | on | Scottish songs. |
Collected and published by | R. H. Cromek. | Ordain'd to fire
th' adoring Sons of Earth | With every charm of wisdom and of
worth; | Or, warm with Fancy's energy to glow, | And rival all
but Shakspeare's name below. | *Pleasures of Hope.* | London: |
printed by J. M'Creery, | for T. Cadell, and W. Davies, Strand.
| 1808.

[ALNWICK: 1808.]

The | poetical works | of | Robert Burns; | with his life. | Ornamented
with | engravings on wood by Mr [Thomas] Bewick, | from
original designs | by Mr Thurston. | In two volumes. | Vol. I. [II.]
| Alnwick: | Printed by Catnach and Davison. | Sold by all the
booksellers in England, Scotland, | and Ireland. | 1808.

[LONDON: 1810.]

Select | Scottish songs, | ancient and modern; | with | critical observa-
tions and biographical notices, | by Robert Burns. | Edited | By
R. H. Cromek, F.A.S.Ed. | Vol. I. [II.] | [Vignette.] | London:
| printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies, Strand. | By J. M'Creery,
Black-Horse-Court, Fleet-Street. | 1810.

[EDINBURGH: 1811.]

Poems | by | Robert Burns: | with | an account of his life, | And Mis-
cellaneous | remarks on his writings (by Josiah Walker); |
Containing also | many poems and letters, | Not printed in |
Doctor Currie's edition. | In two volumes. | Vol. I. [II.] |
'Neath the green turf, dear Nature's Child, | Sublime,
pathetic, artless, wild, | Of all thy quips and cranks despoil'd, |
Cold dost thou lie! And many a Youth and Maiden mild, |
Shall o'er thee sigh!' | Rushton. | Edinburgh: | printed for the
trustees of the late James Morison, | by John Moir, Royal Bank
Close. | 1811.

[AYR: 1819.]

The | poems and songs | of | Robert Burns, | with a | Life of the Author,
| containing a variety of particulars, drawn from sources | in-
accessible by former biographers. | To which is subjoined, | an
appendix, | consisting of a | panegyrical ode, | and | a demon-
stration of Burns' superiority to every | other poet as a writer of
songs, | by | the Rev. Hamilton Paul, | minister of Broughton,
Glenholm and Kilbucho. 12mo. (Portrait and vignette.) | Air
[sic]: | printed by Wilson, M'Cormick and Carnie. | 1819.

[LONDON: 1820.]

The works | of | Robert Burns; | with | an account of his life, | and | a criticism on his writings, | To which are prefixed, | some observations on the character and condition of | the Scottish peasantry. | By James Currie, M.D. F.R.S. | In four volumes. 8vo | Vol. I. [II., etc.] | The eighth edition. | To which are now added, some further particulars of | the author's life, | new notes, illustrative of his poems | and letters, | and many other additions, | By Gilbert Burns. | London: | printed for T. Cadell and W. Davies, Strand; | and | A. Constable and Co., Manners and Miller, | Fairbairn and Anderson, A. Black, W. and C. | Tait, at Edinburgh; and G. Clark, at Aber | deen. | 1820.

[LONDON: 1823.]

The | songs and ballads | of | Robert Burns: | including | ten never before published; | with | a preliminary discourse, and | illustrative prefaces. | London: | printed for William Clark, | 52, Paternoster-row. | 1823.

[LONDON: 1830.]

The | poetical works of | Robert Burns | Volume I [II] | [Printer's mark.] | London | William Pickering | 1830.

[LONDON: 1834.]

The | works | of | Robert Burns; | with | his life, | by | Allan Cunningham. | 'High Chief of Scottish song! | That could'st alternately impart | Wisdom and rapture in thy page; | And brand each vice with satire strong, | Whose lines are mottoes of the heart, | Whose truths electrify the sage.' | Campbell. | In six [eight] volumes. | Vol. I. [II., etc.] | London: | Cochrane and Macrone, [Vols. VII and VIII: James Cochrane and Co.] | 11 Waterloo Place. | 1834.

[GLASGOW: 1834-36.]

The | works | of | Robert Burns. | Edited by | the Ettrick Shepherd, | and | William Motherwell, Esq. | 5 vols. Archibald Fullarton & Co. 1834.

[EDINBURGH: 1838.]

The | poetical works | of | Robert Burns. | To which are now added, | notes | illustrating historical, personal, and local allusions [by Robert Chambers]. | Edinburgh: | published by William and Robert Chambers; | and W. S. Orr and Company, London. | 1838.

[EDINBURGH: 1839.]

The | prose works | of | Robert Burns, | with the | notes of Currie and Cromek, | and many by the present editor [Robert Chambers]. | Edinburgh: | published by William and Robert Chambers; | and W. S. Orr and Company, London. | 1839.

[LONDON : 1839.]

The | poetical works of | Robert Burns | Volume I [II ; III] | [Printer's mark.] | London | William Pickering | 1839.

(Forming part of the series of the Aldine Poets.)

[EDINBURGH : 1843.]

The | correspondence | between | Burns and Clarinda. | With a memoir of | Mrs M'Lehose, (Clarinda.) | Arranged and edited by her grandson, | W. C. M'Lehose. | Edinburgh : | William Tait, 107, Prince's Street ; | Simpkin, Marshall, & Co., London ; | and John Cumming, Dublin. | MDCCCXLIII.

[GLASGOW : 1843-44.]

The works | of | Robert Burns ; | with | Dr Currie's memoir of the poet, | and | an essay on his genius and character, | by Professor Wilson. | Also | numerous notes, annotations, and appendices. | Embellished by eighty-one portraits [Vol. II: portrait] and landscape illustrations. | In two volumes. | Vol. I [II]. | Blackie and Son, | Queen Street, Glasgow ; South College Street, Edinburgh ; | and Warwick Square, London. | MDCCCXLIII [MDCCCXLIV].

[EDINBURGH : 1851-2.]

The | life and works | of | Robert Burns. | Edited by Robert Chambers. | In four volumes. | Vol. I. [II., etc.] | Edinburgh : | William and Robert Chambers. | 1851 [Vols. III and IV : 1852].

[EDINBURGH : 1856-57.]

The | life and works | of | Robert Burns | Edited by Robert Chambers | Library Edition | In four volumes | Volume I [II etc.] | W. & R. Chambers | Edinburgh and London | MDCCCLVI [Vol. IV : MDCCCLVII].

[LONDON : 1856.]

The | poetical works | of | Robert Burns. | Edited by | the Rev. Robert Aris Willmott, | Incumbent of Bear Wood. | Illustrated by John Gilbert. | London : | George Routledge and Co. | Farringdon Street. | New York : 18, Beekman Street. | 1856.

[LONDON : 1865.]

The | poetical works of | Robert Burns | Edited | from the best printed and manuscript authorities, with | glossarial index and a biographical memoir | By Alexander Smith | In two volumes. | Vol. I [II]. | [Vignettes : Vol. I, Naismith [*sic*] Portrait of Burns, engraved by G. B. Shaw ; Vol. II, The Twa Dogs, engraved by 'G. B. Shaw' after 'J.H.B.'] | London and Cambridge : | Macmillan and Co. | 1865.

[GLASGOW : 1867.]

Life and works | of | Robert Burns. | By | P. Hately Waddell, | minister
of the gospel. | Enriched with portraits, and numerous illustrations
in colour, | from original designs, in the highest style of
the art. | [In two volumes.] | Glasgow : I. printed and published
by David Wilson, 14 Maxwell Street. | 1867.

[KILMARNOCK : 1867.]

Poems, | chiefly in the | Scottish dialect, | by | Robert Burns. | The
Simple Bard, unbroke by rules of Art, | He pours the wild
effusions of the heart : | And if inspir'd, 'tis Nature's pow'rs
inspire ; | Her's all the melting thrill and her's the kindling
fire. | Anonymous. | Kilmarnock | : printed by John Wilson. |
MDCCLXXXVI. |

[Reprint and fac-simile of the original Kilmarnock edition, ¹⁷⁹⁶1876.]

[KILMARNOCK : 1869.]

- (1.) Poems, | chiefly in the | Scottish dialect. | By | Robert Burns. |
[Poems as they appeared in the | early Edinburgh editions.] |
Kilmarnock : | printed by James M'Kie. | MDCCCLXIX.
- (2.) Poems, | chiefly in the | Scottish dialect. | By | Robert Burns. |
[Posthumous [*sic*] poems.] | Kilmarnock : | printed by James
M'Kie. | MDCCCLXIX.
- (3.) Songs, | chiefly in the | Scottish dialect. | By | Robert Burns. |
Kilmarnock : | printed by James M'Kie. | MDCCCLXIX.

[KILMARNOCK : 1871.]

Kilmarnock popular edition. | The | complete poetical works | of |
Robert Burns, | arranged in the order of their earliest [Vol. II :
'first'] publication. | Volume first, | embracing all the pieces
published during | his lifetime ; | with a memoir of the poet, on
a plan now first adopted, | and [Vol. II : Volume second, con-
taining all his posthumous pieces [*sic*] ; with] new annotations,
introductory [Vol. II : 'biographical'] notices, &c., | written
expressly for the present work | by William Scott Douglas. |
'O deem not, midst this worldly strife, | An idle art the poet
brings : | Let high philosophy control, | And sages calm the
stream of life ; | 'Tis he refines the fountain-springs— | The
nobler passions of the soul.'—Campbell. | Kilmarnock : | James
M'Kie. | 1871.

[EDINBURGH : 1872.]

Robert Burns' | Common Place Book. | Printed from the Original Manu-
script | in the possession of John Adam, Esq., | Greenock. |
Edinburgh. | Privately Printed. | 1872.

[LIVERPOOL : 1874.]

Some Account of the Glenriddell MSS. of Burns's Poems : With several poems never before Published. Edited by Henry A. Bright. Printed for Private Circulation. Liverpool : Gilbert G. Walmsley, 50 Lord Street, 1874.

[EDINBURGH : 1877-79.]

The works | of | Robert Burns | [Vignette : 'Figure of the "Scottish Muse," as represented in the poem "The Vision," with the wreath of holly in her hand, engraved by Robert Anderson from an original drawing by Clark Stanton, A.R.S.A.'] | Volume first [second, etc.] | Poetry [IV, V, and VI, 'Prose'] | Edinburgh : William Paterson | MDCCCLXXVII [IV. : MDCCCLXXVIII ; V and VI. MDCCCLXXIX]

[GLASGOW : 1879-80.]

The national | Burns | edited by | Rev. George Gilfillan, | including | the airs of all the songs | and an | original life of Burns | by the editor | William Mackenzie | London Glasgow Edinburgh.

[KILMARNOCK : 1889.]

Burns | holograph manuscripts | in the | Kilmarnock | Monument Museum, | with notes. | Compiled and edited by | David Sneddon. | Kilmarnock : | Printed by | D. Brown & Co., (Successors to James M'Kie), | 2 & 6 King Street. | 1889.

[LONDON : 1893.]

The poetical works of | Robert Burns | edited with a memoir by | George A. Aitken. | In Three Volumes | [Printer's mark] | Vol. I [II, etc.] | London | George Bell & Sons, York St., Covent Garden | New York : 112, Fourth Avenue | 1893

[EDINBURGH : 1896.]

The | life and works | of | Robert Burns | Edited by Robert Chambers | Revised by | William Wallace | In four volumes | Volume I. [II., etc.] | W. & R. Chambers, Limited | Edinburgh and London | 1896

[EDINBURGH : 1896.]

The poetry of | Robert Burns | Edited by | William Ernest Henley | and | Thomas F. Henderson. | [In four volumes :] Volume I | Poems published at | Kilmarnock 1786 | Additional poems | Edinburgh | 1787 : 1793 | [Volume II | Posthumous | pieces]. | Edinburgh—T. C. and E. C. Jack | Causewayside—1896

A SELECTION

OF

BURNS LITERATURE, BIOGRAPHIES, CRITICISMS, POEMS, &c.

- AIKEN (PETER FREELAND) Memorials of Robert Burns and of some of his contemporaries and their descendants, by the grandson of Robert Aiken, to whom was dedicated 'The Cotter's Saturday Night.' With a numerous selection of his best poems and songs. London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington. 1876. [Cr. 8°.]
- [AINSLIE (HEW)] A pilgrimage to the land of Burns; containing Anecdotes of the Bard, and of the characters he immortalized, with numerous pieces of poetry. Deptford: printed for the author, by W. Brown. 1822. [Fcap. 8°.] New ed. 1892.
- ANGELLIER (AUGUSTE) Robert Burns: la vie [et] les œuvres. [2 vols.] Paris: Hachette et Cie. 1893. [Roy. 8°.]
- ANNUAL BURNS CHRONICLE and Club Directory. Edited by D. M'Naught, Kilmaurs. Published by the Burns Federation, Kilmaur. First number, 1892. [8°.]
- ARNOLD (MATTHEW) Essays in criticism. Second series. London: Macmillan and Co. 1888. [Cr. 8°.]
- Letters of, 1848-88. Collected by George W. E. Russell. In two volumes. London: Macmillan & Co. 1895.
- See also at WARD, below.
- BLACKIE (JOHN STUART), LL.D. Life of Robert Burns. London: Walter Scott. 1888. [Cr. 8°.]
- BRYDGES (SIR SAMUEL EGERTON) Censura literaria. Containing articles of biography and other literary antiquities. [In ten volumes.] London: Longman, Hurst, Rees and Orme. 1805 [-9]. [8°.] (Vol. II., p. 42; in the edition of 1815, vol. VIII., p. 36.)

- CAMPBELL (THOMAS) Poetical Works. In two volumes. London : Henry Colburn. 1828. [Cr. 8°.]
- Specimens of the British poets. In seven volumes. London : John Murray. 1819. [8°.] (Vol. VII., p. 230.)
- CARLYLE (THOMAS) Burns. London : Chapman and Hall. 1854. [Fcap. 8°.]
- On heroes, hero-worship and the heroic in history. Six Lectures. London : James Fraser. 1841. [Post 8°.]
- CARRUTHERS (ROBERT) LL.D. The highland note-book ; or, sketches and anecdotes. Edinburgh : Adam & Charles Black. 1843. [Fcap. 8°.]
- CHAMBERS'S ENCYCLOPÆDIA. Vol. II. ; Article BURNS by Andrew Lang. William & Robert Chambers, London and Edinburgh. 1888. [Roy. 8°.]
- COMBE (GEORGE) Phrenological development of Robert Burns, from a Cast of his skull moulded at Dumfries, 31st March 1834. [Edinburgh :] W. & A. K. Johnston. 1859. [8°.]
- COX (ROBERT) An essay on the character and cerebral development of Robert Burns. Edinburgh : A. Stewart. 1859. [8°.]
- [CRAIG (ISA)] The Burns Festival. Prize poem recited at the Crystal Palace. January 25, 1859. London : Bradbury and Evans. 1859. [4°, pp. 8.]
- CRAIGIE (WILLIAM A.) A primer of Burns. Methuen & Co., London. 1896. [Cr. 8°.]
- CRAIK (GEORGE L.) LL.D. A compendious history of English literature, and of the English language, from the Norman Conquest. In two volumes. London : Charles Griffin & Company. 1875. [Cr. 8°.]
- The pursnit of knowledge under difficulties. A new edition. London : George Bell and Sons. 1876. [Cr. 8°.]
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- DICTIONARY OF NATIONAL BIOGRAPHY. Vol. VII. ; Article on BURNS by Leslie Stephen, editor. London : Smith, Elder, & Co. 1886. [Roy. 8°.]
- EMERSON (RALPH WALDO) Miscellanies. The Riverside Edition. London : George Routledge and Sons. 1884. [Cr. 8°.]
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- [GAIRDNER (MISS MACRAE SMITH)] '*A Scotchwoman.*' Robert Burns: an inquiry into certain aspects of His Life and Character and the moral influence of his poetry. London: Elliot Stock. 1886. [Fcap. 8°..]
- HANNAY (JAMES) Satire and satirists. Six Lectures. London: David Bogue. 1854. [Fcap. 8°.]
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- HAZLITT (WILLIAM) Lectures on the English poets. London: Taylor and Hessey. 1818. [8°.]
- HEMANS (MRS FELICIA DOROTHEA) Poems. Liverpool: printed by G. F. Harris, for T. Cadell and W. Davies, London. 1808. [4°.]
- [HEPBURN (THOMAS N.)] '*Gabriel Setoun.*' Robert Burns. Famous Scots Series. Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, Edinburgh. [1896. Cr. 8°.]
- HERON (ROBERT) A memoir of the life of the late Robert Burns. Edinburgh: T. Brown. 1797. [8vo.]
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PETERKIN (ALEXANDER) A review of the life of Robert Burns, and of various criticisms on his character and writings. Edinburgh: Macredie, Skelly and Muckersy. 1815. [8°.]

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- '*Hugh Haliburton.*' Furth in field : a volume of essays on the life, language and literature of old Scotland. London : T. Fisher Unwin. 1894. [Cr. 8°.]
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- SETOUN (GABRIEL). See HEPBURN (THOMAS N.).
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- WATSON (WILLIAM) The father of the forest; and other poems. London: John Lane. 1895. [Fcap. 8°.]
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- Complete poetical works. With an introduction by John Morley. London: Macmillan and Co. 1888. [Cr. 8°.]

See also the biographies incorporated with the editions of the works in the preceding lists.

APPENDICES.

NO. I.—ADDITIONAL LETTERS.



THE MSS. of the first and second of the following letters were found among the papers of the late Major Young of Lincluden. Although the first has been already given (Vol. III., p. 196) with conjectural date *August* 1790, it is here inserted—Currie's deviations from the MS. being numerous. The second and third have not been included in any previous edition of Burns's *Works*.

TO MISS HELEN CRAIK, ARBIGLAND.

MADAME—Some unlooked-for accidents have prevented my doing myself the honor of a second visit to Arbigland, as I was so hospitably invited and so positively meant to have done. However, I still hope to have that pleasure before the commencement of the busy days of harvest.

I inclose you two of my late pieces, as some kind of return for the pleasure I have received in perusing a certain manuscript volume of poems in the possession of Captain Riddel. To repay one with an 'old song' is a proverb whose force you, Madam, I know, will not allow. What is said of Illustrious Descent is, I believe, equally true of a Talent for Poesy—none ever despised it who had the least pretensions to it. It is often a reverie of mine when I am disposed to be melancholy, the characters and fates of the Rhyming tribe. There is not among all the martyrologies that ever were penned so rueful a narrative as Johnson's 'Lives of the Poets.' In the comparative view of wretches the criterion is not what they are doomed to suffer, but how they are formed to bear. Take a being of our kind; give him a stronger imagination and more delicate sensibility, which will ever between them engender a more ungovernable set of passions than the usual lot of man; implant in him an irresistible impulse to some idle vagary, such as arranging wild flowers in fantastical nosegays, tracing the grasshopper to his haunt by his chirping song, watching the frisks of the little minnows in the sunny pool or hunting after the intrigues of wanton butterflies; in short, send him adrift after some wayward pursuit, which shall eternally mislead him from the paths of Lucre, yet curse him with a keener relish than any man living for

the pleasures that only lucre can bestow ; lastly, fill up the measure of his woes by bestowing on him a spurning sense of his own dignity ; and you have created a wight nearly as miserable as a poet.

To you, Madam, I need not recount the fairy pleasures the Muse, to counterbalance this catalogue of evils, bestows on her votaries. Bewitching poesy is like bewitching Woman ; she has in all ages been accused of misleading mankind from the counsels of wisdom and the paths of prudence, involving them in difficulties, baiting them with poverty, branding them with infamy, and plunging them in the vortex of Ruin ; yet where is the man but must own that all our happiness on earth is not worthy the name, that even the holy hermit's solitary prospect of paradisaical bliss is but the glitter of a northern sun rising over a frozen region, compared with the many pleasures, the nameless raptures we owe to the lovely QUEENS OF THE HEARTS OF MEN !!!

Please present my most respectful compliments to Mr Craik and the Captain. I have the honour to be, Madam, your very humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

ELLISLAND, 9th August, 1790.

DUMFRIES, 12th January, 1792.

I have just a snatch of time at present to put pen to paper in, but in that moment allow me, Dear Madam, to grant your obliging, flattering request as unceremoniously as a 'how d'ye' to a friend, and as sincerely as a burst of indignation to the person we hate. Setting my obligations to and respect for, the Arbigland family out of the question, any friend of a gentleman whom I value and respect as I do Mr Maxwell of Carruchan may command me, nay, would honour me with his or her commands in a much more important matter than a copy of a poetic bagatelle.

As to *Helen*,* I shall certainly bestow my utmost attention on it, if possible that I can start a hint that may not have occurred to you in smoothing a line or improving a thought. Now that I have, by my removal to town, got time and opportunity, I shall often intrude on you with my assurance how sincerely and respectfully I am, Dear Madam, your obliged and obedient humble servant,

ROBT. BURNS.

TO M. FYFFE, SURGEON, EDINBURGH.†

Saturday morn : six o'clock.

MY DEAR SIR—My loins are girded, my sandals on my feet and my staff in my hand ; and in half-an-hour I shall set off from this venerable, respectable, hospitable, social convivial, imperial Queen of cities, Auld

* 'Helen' is the title of one of the poems in the 'certain MS. volume' referred to in letter of 9th August 1790.

† From the MS. in possession of Andrew Fyffe, Esq., M.D.

Reekie. My compliments to Mr M'Cartney, and I have sent him that engraving. Farewell!

Now, God in heaven bless REEKIE'S town
With plenty, joy and peace!
And may her wealth and fair renown
To latest times encrease !!!—AMEN.

ROBT. BURNS.

NO. II.—MARIA RIDDEL ON BURNS.

Little more than a fortnight after Burns's death, Mrs Riddel, who had, as we have seen, been reconciled to the poet,* sent the following sketch of his character to the *Dumfries Journal*:

The attention of the public is much occupied at present with the irreparable loss it has recently sustained in the death of the Caledonian poet, Robert Burns. It is not probable that this mournful event, which is likely to be felt severely in the literary world, as well as in the circle of private friendship which surrounded him, shall fail to be attended with the usual profusion of posthumous anecdotes and memoirs that commonly spring up at the death of every rare and celebrated personage. I shall not attempt to enlist with the numerous corps of biographers who may, without possessing a kindred genius, arrogate to themselves the privilege of criticising the character and writings of Burns. An 'inspiring mantle' like that thrown over him by the tutelary Muse who first found him 'at the plough' has been vouchsafed to few, and may be the portion of fewer still; and if it be true that men of genius have a claim, in their literary capacities, to the legal right of a British citizen in a court of justice—that of 'being tried only by his peers' (I borrow here an expression I have frequently heard Burns himself make use of), God forbid I should assume the flattering and peculiar privilege of sitting upon his jury! But the intimacy of our acquaintance for several years past may perhaps justify my presenting to the public a few of those ideas and observations I have had the opportunity of forming, and which, to the day that closed for ever the scene of his happy qualities and of his errors, I have never had the smallest cause to deviate in, or to recall.

It will be an injustice done to Burns's reputation in the records of literature, not only as respects future generations and foreign countries, but even with his native Scotland and some of his contemporaries, that he is generally talked of and considered with reference to his poetical

* Several months prior to the death of Burns, Mr Alexander Smellie, son of the rough old typographer and natural historian, had visited Mrs Riddel, and found her talking of the poet in terms of indignation and opprobrium, only perhaps too well justified by his conduct towards herself. He revisited her shortly after Burns's funeral day, and found that all offence had been lost in admiration and regret. Attended by her young friend, the enthusiastic lady after nightfall clambered the kirkyard stile and made her way to the poet's grave, which she planted with laurels and emblematic flowers.

talents *only*. In regarding Burns as something more than a Poet, it must not be supposed that I consider that title as a trivial one; no person can be more penetrated with the respect due to the wreath bestowed by the Muses than myself; and much certainly is due to the merit of a self-taught bard, deprived of the advantages of classical tuition and the intercourse of congenial minds till that period of life when his native fire had already blazed forth in all its wild graces of genuine simplicity and energetic eloquence of sentiment. But the fact is, that even when all his honours are yielded to him, Burns will perhaps be found to move in a poetical sphere less splendid, less dignified, and less attractive, even in his own pastoral style, than some other writers have done. Nevertheless, I hesitate not to affirm—and in vindication of my opinion I appeal to all who had the advantage of personal acquaintance with him—that Poetry was actually not his *forte*. If others have climbed more successfully the heights of Parnassus, none certainly ever outshone Burns in the charms—the sorcery I would almost call it—of fascinating conversation; the spontaneous eloquence of social argument, or the unstudied poignancy of brilliant repartee. His personal endowments were perfectly correspondent with the qualifications of his mind. His form was manly, his action energy itself, devoid in a great measure, however, of those graces, of that polish acquired only in the refinement of societies where in early life he had not the opportunity to mix; but where—such was the irresistible power of attraction that encircled him—though his appearance and manner were always peculiar, he never failed to delight and to *excel*. His figure certainly bore the authentic impress of his birth and original station in life; it seemed moulded by Nature for the rough exercises of agriculture rather than the gentler cultivation of *belles lettres*. His features were stamped with the hardy character of independence, and the firmness of conscious though not arrogant pre-eminence. I believe no man was ever gifted with a larger portion of the *vivida vis animi*: the animated expressions of his countenance were almost peculiar to himself. The rapid lightnings of his eye were always the harbingers of some flash of genius, whether they darted the fiery glances of insulted and indignant superiority, or beamed with the impassioned sentiment of fervent and impetuous affections. His voice alone could improve upon the magic of his eye; sonorous, replete with the finest modulations, it alternately captivated the ear with the melody of poetic numbers, the perspicuity of nervous reasoning, or the ardent sallies of enthusiastic patriotism.

I am almost at a loss to say whether the keenness of satire was the *forte* or the foible of Burns; for though Nature had endowed him with a portion of the most pointed excellence in that ‘perilous gift,’ he suffered it too often to be the vehicle of personal, and sometimes unfounded animosities. It was not always that sportiveness of humour—that ‘unwary pleasantry,’ which Sterne has described to us with touches so conciliatory; but the darts of ridicule were frequently directed as the caprice of the instant suggested, or the altercations of parties or of per-

sons happened to kindle the restlessness of his spirit into interest or aversion. This was not, however, invariably the case; his wit (which is no unusual matter indeed) had always the start of his judgment, and would lead him to the indulgence of raillery uniformly acute, but often unaccompanied with the least desire to wound. The suppression of an arch and full pointed *bon mot*, from dread of injuring its object, the sage of Zurich very properly classes as 'a virtue only to be sought for in the Calendar of Saints;' if so, Burns must not be dealt with unconscionably for being rather deficient in it. He paid the forfeit of his talents as dearly as any one could do. 'Twas no extravagant arithmetic to say of him (as of Yorick), 'that for every ten jokes he got a hundred enemies;' but much allowance should be made by a candid mind for the splenetic warmth of a spirit 'which distress had often spited with the world,' and which, unbounded in its intellectual sallies and pursuits, continually experienced the curbs imposed by the waywardness of his fortune. His soul was never languid or inactive, and his genius was extinguished only with the last sparks of retreating life; but the vivacity of his wishes and temper was checked by constant disappointments which sat heavy on a heart that acknowledged the ruling passion of independence, without having ever been placed beyond the grasp of penury.

Burns possessed none of that negative insipidity of character, whose love must be regarded with indifference, or whose resentment could be considered with contempt; so his passions rendered him—according as they disclosed themselves in affection or antipathy—the object of enthusiastic attachment or of decided enmity. In this respect, the temper of his companions seemed to take the tincture from his own; for *he* acknowledged in the universe but two classes of objects—those of adoration the most fervent, or of aversion the most uncontrollable. It has indeed been frequently asserted of him, that, unsusceptible of indifference, and often hating where he ought to have despised, he alternately opened his heart and poured forth the treasures of his understanding to some who were incapable of appreciating the homage; and elevated to the privilege of adversaries those who were unqualified in all respects for the honour of a contest so distinguished.

It is said that the celebrated Dr Johnson professed to 'love a good hater:' a temperament that had singularly adapted him to cherish a prepossession in favour of our bard, who perhaps fell but little short even of the surly Doctor in this qualification, so long as his ill-will continued; but the fervor of his passions was fortunately corrected by their versatility. He was seldom—never indeed—implacable in his resentments, and sometimes (it has been alleged) not inviolably steady in his engagements of friendship. Much indeed has been said of his inconsistency and caprice; but I am inclined to believe they originated less in a levity of sentiment, than from an extreme impetuosity of feeling which rendered him prompt to take umbrage; and his sensations of pique, where he fancied he had discovered the traces of

unkindness, scorn, or neglect, took their measure of asperity from the overflows of the opposite sentiment which preceded them, and which seldom failed to regain its ascendancy in his bosom, on the return of calmer reflection. He was candid and manly in the avowal of his errors, and *his avowal* was a *reparation*. His native *fiercé* never forsaking him for a moment, the value of a frank acknowledgment was enhanced ten-fold towards a generous mind from its never being attended with servility. His mind, organised only for the stronger and more acute operation of the passions, was impracticable to the efforts of superciliousness that would have depressed it into humility, and equally superior to the encroachments of venal suggestions that might have led him into the mazes of hypocrisy.

It has been observed that he was far from averse to the incense of flattery, and could receive it tempered with less delicacy than might have been expected, as he seldom transgressed extravagantly in that way himself; where he paid a compliment it might indeed claim the power of intoxication, as approbation from him was always an honest tribute from the warmth and sincerity of his heart. It has been sometimes represented, by those who, it would seem had a view to depreciate, though they could not hope wholly to obscure, that native brilliancy which this extraordinary man had invariably bestowed on every thing that came from his lips or pen, that the history of the Ayrshire plough-boy was an ingenious fiction, fabricated for the purposes of obtaining the interests of the great, and enhancing the merits of what in reality required no foil. But had his compositions fallen from a hand more dignified in the ranks of society than that of a peasant, they had perhaps bestowed as unusual a grace there, as even in the humbler shade of rustic inspiration from whence they really sprung.

That Burns had received no classical education, and was acquainted with the Greek and Roman authors only through the medium of translations, is a fact that can be indisputably proven. I have seldom seen him at a loss in conversation, unless where the dead languages and their writers were the subjects of discussion. When I have pressed him to tell me why he never took pains to acquire the Latin in particular (a language which his happy memory had so soon enabled him to be master of), he used only to reply with a smile, that he already knew all the Latin he desired to learn, and that was *omnia vincit amor*; a phrase that from his writings and most favourite pursuits, it should undoubtedly seem he was most thoroughly versed in; but I really believe his classical erudition extended little, if any, further.

The penchant uniformly acknowledged by Burns for the festive pleasures of the table, and towards the fairer and softer objects of Nature's creation, has been the rallying point where the attacks of his censors, both religious and moral, have been directed; and to these, it must be confessed, he showed himself no stoic. His poetical pieces blend, with alternate happiness of description, the frolic spirit of the joy-inspiring bowl, or melt the heart to the tender and impassioned

sentiments in which beauty always taught him to pour forth his own. But who would wish to reprove the failings he has consecrated with such lively touches of nature? And where is the rugged moralist who will persuade us so far to 'chill the genial current of the soul,' as to regret that Ovid ever celebrated his Corinna, or that Anacreon sung beneath his vine?

I will not, however, undertake to be the apologist of the irregularities even of a man of genius, though I believe it is as certainly understood that genius never *was* free of irregularities, as that their absolution may in great measure be justly claimed, since it is evident that the world must have continued very stationary in its intellectual acquirements, had it never given birth to any but men of plain sense. Evenness of conduct, and a due regard to the decorums of the world, have been so rarely seen to move hand in hand with genius, that some have gone so far as to say (though there I cannot wholly acquiesce), that they are even incompatible; but, be it remembered, the frailties that cast their shade over the splendour of superior merit are more conspicuously glaring than where they are the attendants of mere mediocrity. It is only on the gem we are disturbed to see the dust; the pebble may be soiled, and we do not regard it. The eccentric intuitions of genius too often yield the soul to the wild effervescence of desires, always unbounded, and sometimes equally dangerous to the repose of others as fatal to its own. No wonder then if Virtue herself be sometimes lost in the blaze of kindling animation, or that the calm admonitions of reason are not found sufficient to fetter an imagination which scorns the narrow limits and restrictions that would chain it to the level of ordinary minds. Burns, the child of nature and sensibility, unbroke to the refrigerative precepts of philosophy, makes his own artless apology in terms more forcible than all the argumentatory vindications in the world could do. This appears in one of his poems, where he delineates, with his usual simplicity, the progress of his mind, and its gradual expansion to the lessons of the tutelary Muse:—

‘I saw thy pulse’s madd’ning play
Wild send thee Pleasure’s devious way,
Misled by Fancy’s meteor ray,
By passion driven;
But yet the light that led astray
Was light from heaven!’

I have already transgressed far beyond the bounds I had proposed to myself on first committing to paper this sketch, which comprehends what I at least have been led to deem the leading features of Burns’s mind and character. A critique, either literary or moral, I cannot aim at; mine is wholly fulfilled if in these paragraphs I have been able to delineate any of those strong traits that distinguish him, of those talents which raised him from the plough—where he passed the bleak morning of his life, weaving his rude wreaths of poesy with the wild field-flowers that sprung around his cottage—to that enviable eminence of literary

fame, where Scotland shall long cherish his memory with delight and gratitude. Proudly she will remember that beneath her cold sky, a genius was ripened without care or culture, that would have done honour to climes more favourable to the development of those luxuri-ances of fancy and colouring in which he so eminently excelled.

From several paragraphs I have noticed in the public prints, even since the idea was formed of sending this humble effort in the same direction, I find private animosities have not yet subsided, and that envy has not yet exhausted all her shafts. I still trust, however, that honest fame will be permanently affixed to Burns's character—a fame which the candid and impartial of his own countrymen, and his readers everywhere, will find he *has* merited. And wherever a kindred bosom is found that has been taught to glow with the fires that animated Burns, should a recollection of the imprudences that sullied his brighter qualifications interpose, let such an one remember the imperfection of all human excellence,—let him leave those inconsistencies which alternately exalted his nature into the seraph and sunk it again into the man, to the Tribunal which *alone* can investigate the labyrinths of the human heart.

‘ In vain we seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode ;
There they alike in trembling hope repose—
The bosom of his Father and his God.’

M. R.

No. III.—TESTIMONIES OF GRAY AND FINDLATER.*

BURNS'S CHARACTER.

The following letters were written to Alexander Peterkin, and inserted by him in his edition of Burns's *Works* (1815) :

EDINBURGH, 28th September 1814.

DEAR SIR—I am happy to learn that you are engaged in a vindication of the character of Burns from the calumnies contained in some of our most popular literary journals. The fate of this great man has been singularly hard ; during the greater part of his life, he was doomed to struggle with adverse fortune, and no friendly hand was stretched forth to shield him from the storm that at last overwhelmed him. It seemed even to have been the object of a jealous and illiberal policy to accelerate his ruin. His enemies have ascribed to him vices foreign to his nature ; have exaggerated his failings, and have not even had the justice to relieve the deep shades of imputed depravity, by a single ray of virtue.

* James Gray was rector of Dumfries Academy from 1794, and taught young Robert, if not other of Burns's sons. He was afterwards a master in the High School, Edinburgh, and latterly took orders and lived in India. Findlater was Burns's supervisor, frequently referred to in the text.

In their portraits there is none of that disposition of light and shade, in which nature delights. They resemble the works of the caricature painter, in which every beauty is concealed, and every deformity overcharged, rather than the correct likeness of the honest artist, studious of the fidelity of his representation. The truth is, that not one of the periodical writers who have thought fit to pronounce judgment in so decisive a tone, on the moral conduct of the Poet, had the means of forming a fair estimate of his character. They had heard certain reports injurious to his reputation, and they received them without examination as established facts. It is besides to be lamented, that the most respectable of his biographers has in some cases suffered himself to be misled by the slanderous tales of malice or party spirit.

Every lover of genius, and every friend of the family of Burns, ought to feel grateful to Dr Currie for the generous manner in which he came forward to rescue the widow and orphans from absolute want; for it deserves to be recorded to his honour that by his gratuitous exertions, they were put in possession of nearly twelve hundred pounds. Great judgment and talent are displayed in the execution of the work. The posthumous poetry does equal credit to the taste of the biographer, and the genius of the Poet; and the letters are so judiciously selected as at once to illustrate his life and character. I am, therefore, reluctantly compelled, by justice to an injured name, to animadvert on the passage, which you have submitted to my consideration. I love Dr Currie, but I love the fame of Burns more; and no authority, how respectable soever, shall deter me from a bold declaration of the truth.

The poet of the Cotter's Saturday Night, who felt all the charms of the humble piety and virtue, which he has so delightfully sung, is here charged with vices which would reduce him to a level with the most degraded of his species. 'He is a habitual drunkard—he spends his time in society of the lowest kind—he is the sport of uncontrolled passions—he is polluted by contamination, over which delicacy and humanity draw a veil.' On each of these charges, I shall hazard a few remarks; and as I knew him during that period of his life, emphatically denominated his evil days, *I am enabled to speak from my own observation*. It is not my intention to extenuate his errors, because they were combined with genius; on that account, they are only the more dangerous, because the more seductive, and deserve the more severe reprehension; but I shall likewise claim, that nothing may be set down in malice against him.

But to proceed; he was not a habitual drunkard. Of this assertion, many proofs might be adduced. A few shall suffice. To the period of his last illness, he discharged all the duties of his station with a most scrupulous exactness. In a situation that requires constant and minute attention, he never neglected the call of duty. We have the testimony of his superior, that he was a faithful and correct officer, equally attentive to the interests of Government, and liberal to the fair trader. Not many days passed during his stay in Dumfries, in which he did not compose some piece of poetry, or some song, destined to delight the imagina-

tion, and soften the heart for ages to come. It was during the last years of his life that he erected the most lasting monument of his genius, by composing those numberless lyrical effusions that enrich Mr Thomson's collection; which, for simplicity, pathos, truth to nature, and a fine adaptation to the heart-stirring melodies of our native land, are unrivalled in any language. It came under my own view professionally, that he superintended the education of his children with a degree of care that I have never seen surpassed by any parent in any rank of life whatever. In the bosom of his family, he spent many a delightful hour in directing the studies of his eldest son, a boy of uncommon talents. I have frequently found him explaining to this youth, then not more than nine years of age, the English poets, from Shakespeare to Gray, or storing his mind with examples of heroic virtue, as they live in the pages of our most celebrated English historians. I would ask any person of common candour, if employments like these are consistent with habitual drunkenness?

It is not, however, denied that he sometimes mingled with society unworthy of him. He was of a social and convivial nature. He was courted by all classes of men for the fascinating powers of his conversation, but over his social scene uncontrolled passion never presided. Over the social bowl, his wit flashed for hours together, penetrating whatever it struck, like the fire from heaven; but even in the hour of thoughtless gaiety and merriment, I never knew it tainted by indecency. It was playful or caustic by turns, following an allusion through all its windings; astonishing by its rapidity, or amusing by its wild originality, and grotesque, yet natural combinations, but never, within my observation, disgusting by its grossness.

In his morning hours, I never saw him like one suffering from the effects of last night's intemperance. He appeared then clear and unclouded. He was the eloquent advocate of humanity, justice, and political freedom. From his paintings, virtue appeared more lovely, and piety assumed a more celestial mien. While his keen eye was pregnant with fancy and feeling, and his voice attuned to the very passion which he wished to communicate, it would hardly have been possible to conceive any being more interesting and delightful. I may likewise add, Sir, that to the very end of his life, reading was his favourite amusement. I have never known any man so intimately acquainted with the elegant English authors. He seemed to have the poets by heart. The prose authors he could quote either in their own words, or clothe their ideas in language more beautiful than their own. Nor was there ever any decay in any of the powers of his mind. To the last day of his life, his judgment, his memory, his imagination were fresh and vigorous as when he composed the *Cotter's Saturday Night*. I would again ask, is all this consistent with the idea that he was a man 'perpetually stimulated by alcohol'?

The truth is, that Burns was seldom *intoxicated*. The drunkard soon becomes besotted, and is shunned even by the convivial. Had he been so, he could not have long continued the idol of every party. It will,

however, he freely confessed, that the hour of enjoyment was often prolonged beyond the limit marked by prudence; but what man will venture to affirm that, in situations where he was conscious of giving so much pleasure, he could at all times have listened to her voice.

The men with whom he generally associated, were not of the lowest order. He numbered among his intimate friends, many of the most respectable inhabitants of Dumfries and the vicinity. Several of those were attached to him by ties that the hand of calumny, busy as it was, could never snap asunder. They admired the poet for his genius, and loved the man for the candour, generosity, and kindness of his nature. His early friends clung to him through good and bad report, with a zeal and fidelity that prove their disbelief of the malicious stories circulated to his disadvantage. Among them were some of the most distinguished characters in this country, and not a few females, eminent for delicacy, taste and genius. They were proud of his friendship, and cherished him to the last moment of his existence. He was endeared to them even by his misfortunes, and they still retain for his memory that affectionate veneration which virtue alone inspires.

It would have been less cruel, and not more unjust, had Dr Currie torn away the veil which 'delicacy and humanity' draw over the failings of the poet; for no exposure of facts, of what moral turpitude soever, could have inflicted a more deadly wound on his character, than this insinuation.

The strictures of a biographer of the Scottish poets, are little more than a repetition and expansion of the passage just considered. I should therefore pass them over without further notice, did they not contain an allusion to the political opinions of the poet, on which the Edinburgh Reviewer has chosen to be silent altogether, and the English Reviewer has touched but slightly.

Burns was one of those who hailed with delight the dawn of the French revolution, as about to shed in its beams, freedom, peace and happiness over a large portion of the earth. He was enthusiastically fond of liberty, and a lover of the popular part of our constitution. Yet he saw and admired the just and delicate proportions of the political fabric; and nothing could be farther from his aim, than to level with the dust the venerable pile reared by the labours and the wisdom of ages. That provision of the constitution, however, by which it is made to contain a self-correcting principle, obtained no inconsiderable share of his admiration: He was therefore a zealous advocate of constitutional reform. The necessity of this he often supported in conversation with all the energy of an irresistible eloquence: But there is no evidence that he ever went farther. He was a member of no political club. At the time, when, in certain societies, the mad cry of revolution was raised from one end of the kingdom to the other, his voice was never heard in their debates, nor did he ever support their opinions in writing, or correspond with them in any form whatever. Though limited to an income which any other man would have considered poverty, he refused £50 a-year, offered

to him for a weekly article, by the proprietors of an opposition paper. Two reasons, equally honourable to him, induced him to reject this proposal. His independent spirit spurned the idea of becoming the hireling of a party; and whatever might have been his opinion of the men and measures that then prevailed, he did not think it right to fetter the operations of that Government by which he was employed.

Yet, Sir, in the face of those known facts, there were individuals from whom he experienced the most cruel political persecution. These men, in violation of all the laws of justice, humanity and candour, construed every stroke of humour, every word uttered in the heat of debate, or the moment of enthusiasm, that did not correspond with their notions of political orthodoxy, into hostility to the existing order of things. To their eternal infamy, they gave that information which brought upon the poet the thunders of the Board of Excise, when he was told that it was for him to act not to think, and which nearly wrested the crust of bread from the lips of his wife and children. It may likewise be observed, that from the same source many of these calumnies flowed, which have since been echoed from the Forth to the Ganges, with such malevolent delight.

The reflections in the *Edinburgh Review* come next to be considered, and I shall freely tell you, the first time I read this article, had I not been informed in the title that it referred to Burns, (at least as far as character is concerned,) I should never have made the discovery myself.—But the Reviewer shall speak for himself: I refer to the passage you have quoted.

The most ingenious reasoning, with all the decorations of beautiful composition, are but as dust in the balance when unsupported by fact. It happens here, as in a former case, that facts are not only wanting to prop the hypothesis, but there are known facts from which conclusions must be drawn diametrically opposite. The whole passage, as applied to Burns, is a calumny, and if it does not apply to him, why is it here at all? ‘He never spent in vain superfluities, the money that belonged in right to the pale industrious tradesman, and his famishing infants. He never raved about friendship and philanthropy in a tavern, while his wife’s heart was breaking, and his children pining in cheerless poverty.’

Though his annual income was not above £75, yet, by a rigid economy, the offspring of that spirit of independence, which regulated every action of his life—and which not even poverty could quell,—he so managed this pittance, as decently to support his family, without incurring debt, and even to have something to spare for the purposes of charity. His ear was never shut against the cry of poverty and distress, and he was known frequently to bestow on the children of affliction, sums much larger than might have been expected, from considerations due to his own narrow finances. It is a singular fact, that at his death, the whole amount of his debts was not twenty pounds: of this, only a few pounds were for house accounts; all the rest was for volunteer uniform. I have the authority of Mrs Burns herself for stating, that to her and to her children he was uniformly kind, cheerful, and attentive; that he was

an affectionate husband, and a fond father; that he never addressed her in the tone of displeasure, and that, in her presence, his brow was never clouded by a frown.

Why couple the name of Burns with the 'heroics of the hulks and Botany Bay'? The Reviewer surely does not mean to rank him with those degraded wretches, in whose bosoms every spark of humanity has become extinct, and who, by every species of contamination, have effaced from their souls the very impress of a divine origin. If he does not mean this, what does he mean? Does a great part of the productions of Burns bear a character of immorality at once hateful and contemptible? This is really too much! In support of this extraordinary assertion, some passage might have been quoted; for surely an allegation so new to the readers of Burns required proof.

It is singular, that since the publication of the Review under consideration, not one writer has arisen, who has had the courage to stem the torrent of obloquy poured on Burns, by a simple statement of facts. A lady, whose genius has been acknowledged by the voice of her country, has offered to the world an apology for his failings, written with her usual eloquence, and in the spirit of that candour for which she is distinguished; but even she seems to admit statements, which, if true, must condemn him. Of the rest, not one has even by accident stumbled into the path of truth. Yet it is likely, had he been still alive to defend himself, these men would have been silent. They must have known, that he was an enemy not to be provoked; that he could wield the weapons of ridicule with as much skill, and launch the thunderbolt of destruction with as certain an aim as any of themselves.—I am, Dear Sir, with esteem, Your faithful friend,

JAMES GRAY.

To Mr Peterkin.

GLASGOW, 10th Oct. 1814.

SIR—I entirely agree with you in opinion, on the various accounts which have been given to the world of the life of Robert Burns; and can have no hesitation in expressing publicly my sentiments on his official conduct, at least, and perhaps in other respects, as far as may appear necessary for the development of truth. Amongst his biographers, Dr Currie, of course, takes the lead, and the severity of his strictures, or, to borrow the words of the 'Poet,' his 'iron-justice,' is much to be regretted, as his 'Life' has become a kind of text-book for succeeding commentators, who have, by the aid of their own fancies, amplified, exaggerated, and filled up the outlines he has sketched, and in truth left in such a state as to provoke an exercise of that description.

It is painful to trace all that has been written on this subject by Dr Currie's successors, who seem to have considered the history of the Poet as a thing like Ulysses' bow, on which each was at liberty to try his strength; and some, in order to out-do their competitors, have strained

every nerve to throw all kinds of obloquy on his memory. His convivial habits, his wit and humour, his social talents, and his independent spirit, have been perverted into constant and habitual drunkenness, impiety, neglect of his professional duty, and of his family, and in short, almost every human vice : He has been branded with cowardice, accused of attempting murder and even suicide ; and all this without a shadow of proof—*Proh Pudor!* Is there nothing of tenderness due to the memory of so transcendent a genius, who has so often delighted even his libellers with the felicities of his song, and the charms of his wit and humour? And is no regard to be had to the feelings of those near and dear relatives he has left behind ; or are his ashes never to ‘*hope repose*’?—My indignation has unwarily led me astray from the point to which I meant to have confined myself, and to which I will now recur, and briefly state what I have to say on this subject.

My connection with Robert Burns commenced immediately after his admission into the Excise, and continued to the hour of his death. In all that time, the superintendence of his behaviour, as an officer of the revenue, was a branch of my especial province, and it may be supposed I would not be an inattentive observer of the *general* conduct of a man and a poet, so celebrated by his countrymen. In the former capacity, so far from its being ‘impossible for him to discharge the duties of his office with that regularity which is almost indispensable,’ as is palpably assumed by one of his biographers, and insinuated not very obscurely even by Dr Currie, he was exemplary in his attention as an Excise officer ; and was even jealous of the least imputation on his vigilance : as a proof of which, it may not be foreign to the subject, to quote a part of a letter from him, to myself, in a case of only *seeming* inattention.—‘I know, Sir, and regret deeply, that this business glances with a malign aspect on my character as an officer ; but as I am really innocent in the affair ; and as the gentleman is known to be an illicit dealer, and particularly as this is the *single* instance of the least shadow of carelessness or impropriety in my conduct as an officer, I shall be peculiarly unfortunate if my character shall fall a sacrifice to the dark manœuvres of a smuggler.’—This of itself affords more than a presumption of his attention to business ; as it cannot be supposed he would have written in such a style *to me*, but from the impulse of a conscious rectitude in this department of his duty. Indeed, it was not till near the latter end of his days, that there was any falling off in this respect ; and this was amply accounted for in the pressure of disease and accumulating infirmities. About this period I advised him to relinquish business altogether, which he complied with ; but it distressed him a good deal, as he was thereby liable to suffer a diminution of salary, and he wrote to Commissioner Graham, in the hope that that gentleman’s influence would get his full pay continued during his illness, which I have no doubt it would have done, if he had recovered. In the mean time, Mr Graham wrote him a letter, exhibiting a solid proof of his generosity and friendship : but alas ! the Poet was by this time too far gone towards that ‘undis-

covered country, from whose bourne no traveller returns,'—and could not acknowledge it.

Having stated Burns's *unremitting attention to business*, which certainly was not compatible with perpetual intoxication; it follows, of course, that this latter charge must fall to the ground: and I will further avow, that I never saw him, which was very frequently while he lived at Ellisland, and still more so, almost every day, after he removed to Dumfries, but in hours of business he was quite himself, and capable of discharging the duties of his office: nor was he ever known to drink by himself, or seen to indulge in the use of liquor in a forenoon, as the statement, that he was *perpetually* under its stimulus, unequivocally implies.

To attempt the refutation of the various other calumnies with which his memory has been assailed, some of which are so absurd as hardly to merit any attention, does not fall in my way, though I hope they will be suitably taken notice of; but permit me to add, that I have seen Burns in all his various phases, in his convivial moments, in his sober moods, and in the bosom of his family: indeed, I believe I saw more of him than any other individual had occasion to see, after he became an Excise officer, and I never beheld any thing like the gross enormities with which he is now charged: That when set down in an evening with a few friends whom he liked, he was apt to prolong the social hour beyond the bounds which prudence would dictate, is unquestionable; but in his family, I will venture to say, he was never seen otherwise than attentive and affectionate to a high degree. Upon the whole, it is much to be lamented that there has been so much broad, unqualified assertion as has been displayed in Burns's history; the virulence indeed with which his memory has been treated, is hardly to be paralleled in the annals of literature. Wishing every success to the laudable attempt of rescuing it from the indiscriminate abuse which has been heaped upon it, I remain, Sir, Your most obedient servant,

A. FINDLATER.

To Mr Alex. Peterkin, Edinburgh.

NO. IV.—THE BURNS FAMILY.

The children of the marriage of Robert Burns and Jean Armour who survived mere infancy were:

ROBERT, born 3d September 1786, died 14th May 1857.

FRANCIS WALLACE, born 18th August 1789, died 9th July 1803.

WILLIAM NICOL, born 9th April 1791, died 21st February 1872.

ELIZABETH RIDDEL, born 21st November 1792, died September 1795.

JAMES GLENCAIRN, born 12th August 1794, died 18th November 1865.

MAXWELL, born 25th July 1796, died 23d November 1799.

Robert's twin-sister Jean died in infancy, as did the twin-daughters born on 3d March 1788; these are all buried in Mauchline churchyard.

Robert, born at Mauchline, educated at Glasgow and Edinburgh Universities, got in 1804 a post in the Stamp Office, London, from which he retired on a pension in 1833. Married in 1808 Anne Sherwood, and had issue a daughter Eliza, who married Dr Everitt of the Madras Civil Service, and died in 1878. Her only child, Martha, married Matthew Thomas, and lives at Martinstown, Killinick, County Wexford, Ireland. She has no child.

Francis Wallace, born at Ellisland, was barely fourteen at his death.

William Nicol, born at Ellisland, went to the East Indies as a midshipman at the age of fifteen; got a cadetship in 1811; served more than thirty years in the 7th Madras Infantry, and retired Lieutenant-Colonel in 1843; 1855 brevet Colonel; married, 1822, Catherine A. Crone (died 1841), and died at Cheltenham, where he lived in retirement with his brother James.

Elizabeth Riddell, born at Dumfries; died at Mauchline, and was buried in the Armour lair in Mauchline churchyard.

James Glencairn went from Dumfries Grammar School, where he and all his brothers commenced their education, to Christ's Hospital, London, where a foundation had been procured for him; got, like William Nicol, a cadetship in the H.E.I.C.'s Service in 1811, and rose to be Major and ultimately in 1855 brevet Lieutenant-Colonel. Part of his time in India he passed in the Civil Service. Married (1) Sarah Robinson (died 1821) and had issue a daughter and a son, who died in early infancy, and Sarah Burns, born 1821, and still living in Cheltenham; (2) Mary Beckett, by whom he had one daughter, Annie Beckett Burns, also living and resident with her half-sister. Sarah Burns married Dr B. W. Hutchinson, and has issue one son and three daughters—Annie Vincent Burns Hutchinson, married James Scott, Brookside, near Adelaide, and has no issue; Robert Burns Hutchinson, at present a clerk in Chicago; married, and has one daughter, born 1894; Violet Burns Hutchinson, married George H. Gowing, and has no issue; and Margaret Conalaine Burns Hutchinson, unmarried, living with her mother in Cheltenham. Robert Burns Hutchinson is the only male representative of the direct line now living.*

Gilbert Burns (born 28th September 1760) left Mossgiel in 1798, having taken a lease of the farm of Dinning in Nithsdale from Mr Monteith of Closeburn. In 1800 he removed to East Lothian to manage the farm of Morham West Mains (now Morham Muir) for Captain Dunlop (son and heir of Mrs Dunlop of Dunlop). In 1804 Katharine, Lady Blantyre, appointed him factor of her East Lothian estates, and gave him a free house (Grant's Braes, about a mile west of Haddington), and a salary of £100, afterwards raised to £140. He married in 1791 Miss Jean Breckenridge of Kilmarnock, who was connected by marriage with Sir James Shaw, already mentioned, and had eleven children. He died at Grant's Braes on 8th April 1827, and was buried in Bolton churchyard.

* The mother of Robert and Gilbert Burns lived with the latter till her death in 1820, at the age of eighty-eight. She was buried in the churchyard of Bolton, East Lothian.

The other children of William Burnes and Agnes Brown were—Agnes (born 30th September 1762) married, at the age of forty-two, William Galt, a servant of Gilbert's, who was afterwards a land-steward in the north of Ireland. She died without issue in 1834. Annabella (born 14th November 1764) lived unmarried with Gilbert till her death in 1832. She was buried in Bolton churchyard. William (born 30th July 1767). See Vol. III. *passim*. He died in London, 24th July 1790. John (born 10th July 1769, died 1783). And

Isabella (born 27th July 1771) married, at the age of twenty-two, John Begg, whom Gilbert employed to manage the farm of Dinning when he left it, with his lease unfinished, to go to Morham. Mr Begg was afterwards land-steward on Mr Hope Vere's estate of Blackwood, Lanarkshire, and was accidentally killed there in 1813. His widow died in 1858 at Bridge House, near Ayr. They had nine children. Mrs Begg supported herself in her widowhood by teaching. Through the exertions of Thomas Carlyle, Lord Houghton, and Robert Chambers, she secured in 1842 a government pension of £20 a year, with reversion to her daughters. Messrs W. & R. Chambers gave her the first profits of their 1851-52 edition of this book, and at the time of the centenary celebration in 1859, a sum of £1000 was raised for her daughters, Carlyle* again taking a lively interest in the subscription. £50 of the money collected was voted to Mrs Thomson (Betty Burns) of Crossmyloof.

The Burns Begg of Kinross are descended from Mrs Begg's third son, Robert.

NO. V.—MONUMENTS AND STATUES.

The principal Burns monuments are :

The MAUSOLEUM at DUMFRIES, in which lie the remains of the poet, his wife and children. General Dunlop, son of Burns's friend, presided at the meeting in 1813 at which it was resolved to build a mausoleum,

* Carlyle, announcing to Mrs Begg the grant of the pension on 7th June 1842, wrote : ' Properly, however, you do not owe this to anybody, but to your own illustrious brother, whose noble life—wasted tragically away—pleads now aloud to men of every rank and place for some humanity to his last surviving sister. May God give you all good of this gift, and make it really useful to you. You need not answer this letter ; it is a mere luxury that I give myself in writing it.'

Again, when the subscription for the Misses Begg was mooted, Carlyle wrote to the editor of the *Ayr Advertiser* :—' Dear Sir—I very much approve your and Mr Milnes's notion about the Misses Begg, and I hope you will not fail to get your plan executed with all the energy and skill that are possible, and with corresponding success. Could all the eloquence that will be uttered over the world on the 25th inst., or even all the tavern bills that will be incurred, but convert themselves into solid cash for these two interesting persons, what a sum were there of benefit received, and of loss avoided to all parties concerned !—Serving indigent merit on the one hand, and saving on the other hand, what is too truly a frightful (though eloquent) expenditure of *parvenue* to a certain *locality* we have all heard of !—In much haste, I remain, yours truly, T. CARLYLE.'

and as has been stated, the poet's body and those of his two sons, Maxwell and Francis, were transferred to it on 12th September 1815. A Latin inscription was composed for it, but never cut.

The MONUMENT on ALLOWAY CROFT, close to the auld brig of Doon. The foundation stone was laid on the 25th January 1820, by Sir Alexander Boswell of Auchinleck, who presided over the public meeting in Ayr at which the erection of a monument was agreed to, the Rev. Hamilton Paul constituting the audience. £3300 was subscribed for the purpose.

The EDINBURGH MONUMENT was an after-thought. A subscription was commenced in 1812, by John Forbes Mitchell, of Bombay, for the purpose of setting up a colossal statue of Burns on a conspicuous site in the capital. Flaxman agreed to furnish a life-size marble statue for £1400, and ultimately offered to execute it, either in bronze or in marble, for nothing. He did not live to finish his work—marble was chosen as the material—and it was finished by his brother-in-law and pupil, Mr Denman. Then, the surplus being large, it was resolved to erect a building wherein to house the statue. More money was needed, and at length more than £3300 was got. The foundation stone was laid in 1831. In 1861 the statue was removed to the Scottish National Gallery, and in 1889 to the Scottish National Portrait Gallery.

On the 25th January 1842, a monument to the memory of Mary Campbell was erected in the West Churchyard, Greenock; and a bronze statue of her by D. W. Stevenson, R.S.A., was unveiled at Dunoon, on 1st August 1896, by Lady Kelvin.

The principal Statues of Burns are :

EDINBURGH, Flaxman, described above.

GLASGOW, bronze, by George Edwin Ewing, unveiled in George Square, on 25th January 1877, by Lord Houghton.

KILMARNOCK, marble, by W. G. Stevenson, R.S.A., originated 1872, by James McKie, unveiled 9th August 1879, by Colonel (afterwards General) Sir Claid Alexander of Ballochmyle, M.P.

NEW YORK, bronze, by Sir John Steell, R.S.A., unveiled 2d October 1880, an oration being delivered by George William Curtis.

DUNDEE, replica of the New York statue, unveiled 16th October 1880.

DUMFRIES, marble, by Mrs D. O. Hill (sister of Sir Noel Paton), unveiled 6th April 1882, by the Earl of Rosebery.

LONDON, replica of New York and Dundee statues, altered in some particulars, unveiled, on the Thames Embankment, in 1884, by the Earl of Rosebery.

ALBANY (U.S.), by Charles Calverley, unveiled 30th September 1888. Erected out of funds (some 40,000 dols.) left by an eccentric old Scotchwoman, Mary M'Pherson, resident in Albany.

AYR, bronze, by G. A. Lawson, H.R.S.A. unveiled in 1891.

ABERDEEN, bronze, by Henry Bainsmith, a native of Aberdeen, unveiled 15th September 1892, by Professor Masson.

IRVINE, bronze, by G. Pittendrigh Macgillivray, A.R.S.A., unveiled 18th July 1896, by Alfred Austin, poet laureate.

PAISLEY, bronze, by Fred. W. Pomeroy, London; unveiled by the Earl of Rosebery on 26th September 1896.

On 7th March 1885 a bust of Burns was unveiled by Lord Rosebery in the Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey. The sculptor was Sir John Steell, R.S.A.

There are statues also in Chicago (by W. G. Stevenson), Brisbane, and Adelaide; and Denver has selected a design by W. G. Stevenson.

NO. VI.—BURNS CELEBRATIONS.

On Tuesday, 6th August 1844, a Festival was held in honour of the sons of Burns on the banks of Doon. A banquet was held in a pavilion which was built to hold two thousand people. The Earl of Eglinton ('princely Eglinton') presided, and the three eldest sons of the poet were present, as well as Mrs Begg and three of her children, Robert, Agnes, and Isabella, Mrs Thomson, Dumfries (Jessy Lewars), and a distinguished company, the Croupier, Professor Wilson ('Christopher North'), being supported by Sir Archibald Alison.

The Centenary of the Poet's birth was celebrated on 25th January 1859. There were ten gatherings in Edinburgh, and Lord Ardmillan presided at the principal banquet in the Music Hall. Of some twenty meetings held in Glasgow, the chief was held in the City Hall. Sir Archibald Alison presided, and was supported by Colonel James Glencairn Burns, Samuel Lover, Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton), Sir David Brewster, Judge Haliburton, Blanchard Jerrold, Dr Norman Macleod, and Dr Charles Rogers. Meetings were held in Ayr, Kilmarnock, Dumfries, and elsewhere. Colonel William Nicol Burns was the guest at the Dumfries banquet.

The Death Centenary was celebrated in 1896 by public meetings in many towns, of which the most important was that in Glasgow, on 21st July, and by a procession the same day to the Mausoleum in Dumfries, in which were laid wreaths sent from all parts of the world. The Earl of Rosebery delivered two very notable orations—one in Dumfries and the other at the Glasgow public meeting. A Burns Exhibition, comprising portraits, paintings, and engravings, books, manuscripts and relics, was opened in Glasgow on 15th July and closed in the beginning of November.

At a meeting held in London in February 1885, a federation of Burns Clubs was formed under the title of the Burns Federation. It has issued yearly, since 1892, the *Burns Chronicle*. Seventy-four clubs are affiliated, and its register contained in 1896 the names of ninety-one unaffiliated clubs.

No. VII.—VARIATIONS IN TEXT OF POEMS.

Pages 49, 50.—‘ROBERT BRUCE’S ADDRESS TO HIS ARMY.’

The first draft of the ‘address’ is as follows. Scott Douglas gave it from the MS.

Scots, wha hae wi’ Wallace bled,
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led,
Welcome to your gory bed
Or to Victorie.

Now’s the day and now’s the hour,
See approach proud Edward’s power;
Sharply maun we bide the stoure—
Either they, or we.

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward’s grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flie!

Wha for Scotland’s King, and Law,
Freedom’s sword will strongly draw,
Free-man stand, or Free-man fa’,
Let him follow me!

Do you hear your children cry—
‘Were we born in chains to lie?’
No! Come Death, or Liberty!
Yes, they shall be free!

Lay the proud Usurpers low!
Tyrants fall in every foe!
Liberty’s in every blow!
Let us Do or Die!!

Pages 68, 69.—‘ADDRESS SPOKEN BY MISS FONTENELLE.’

Page 68, line 4—said = thought.

“ lines 5, 6—*read*,

So sought a Poet in his skyey dome,

Told him { in admiration } I was come.
 { that to admire him }

“ line 9, &c., *read*,

‘O, Ma’am,’ replied the silly strutting creature,
Screwing each self-important, awkward feature,
‘Flattery I detest, as I admire your taste,
At once so just, correct, profound, and chaste.’

“ line 22—*read*, Believe me, Gentiles, ’tis my fix’d belief.

Page 68, lines 24, 25—*read*,

I also think : so come my soul to bliss !

That so much laughter, so much happiness.

" lines 26, 27—omit.

" " 28—*read*,

Thou man of care, whose task is to contrive.

" 69, after line 8—insert

For shame, for shame, I tell thee thou art no man :

This for a giddy, vain, capricious woman ?

A creature, though I say 't, you know that should not ;

Ridiculous with her idiot ' Would ' and ' Would not . '

" 69, line 11—*read*,

Laugh at her airs—these frowns no more terrific.

Page 156.—' TO CHLORIS . '

The following variations appear in a MS.—a draft—in possession of
Mr R. B. Adam, Buffalo :

Verse 2—*reads*, Since thou, though all in youthful charms,

Bidd'st Public Life adieu,

And shunn'st a world of woes and harms

To bless the Friendly few.

Verse 2, line 2—Must = Hast.

" 3, " 2—Chill came = Succeeds.

" 4, " 1—*read*, Though life's gay scenes delight no more.

" 4, " 3—*read*, Still art thou rich in nobler store.

" 6, " 3—were = is.

" 6, " 4—could = should.

Pages 186, 187.—' A MAN 'S A MAN FOR A ' THAT . '

The following is from a draft of the poem—

What tho' on homely fare we dine,

Wear hodding grey, and a' that ;

Gie fools their silk and knaves their wine,

A man 's a man for a' that :

For a' that, and a' that,

Their tinsel show, and a' that ;

An honest man, tho' ne'er so poor,

Is chief of man for a' that.

You see yon Birkie ca'd a Lord,

Who struts, an' stares, an' a' that,

Tho' hundreds beckon at his nod,

Perhaps a cuif for a' that :

For a' that, an' a' that,

His dignities, an' a' that,

A man of independent mind

Can sing and laugh at a' that.

The King can mak a beltet Knight,
 A Marquis, Duke, and a' that ;
 But an honest man 's aboon his might—
 Gude faith, he mauna fa' that.

For a' that, an' a' that,
 His garters, stars an' a' that,
 The pith of sense and wale of worth
 Are better far than a' that.

Then let us pray the time may come—
 An' come it will for a' that—
 When sense and truth, o'er a' the Earth,
 Shall bear the grie, for a' that.

For a' that, an' a' that,
 An' come it will for a' that,
 An' man to man, the world o'er,
 Shall Brothers be for a' that.

PAGES 196-198.—'FIRST BALLAD ON MR HERON'S ELECTION.'

Verse 1, line 1—Wham = whom ; we = ye

" " 2—To = For.

" 2, " 8—*read*, The honest man for a' that.

" 3, " 3—*read*, Wi' Dukes and Lords ; *or*
 Wi' Earls and Dukes.

" " 7—An = The ; commoner = patriot.

" 4, " 2—is 't = it 's.

" " 3—*read*, For why ? a Lord may be a gowk.

" 5, " 4—man = lad.

" " 7—We are na = For we 're not.

PAGES 198-201.—'BALLAD SECOND : THE ELECTION.'

Verse 1, lines 6-8—*read*,

And Gordon that keenly will start ;
 Why shameless her lane is the lassie ?
 E'en let her kind kin take a part.

" " 8—kin = sin.

" 2, " 1—black-nebbit = black-lippit.

" " 5-8—*read*,

And there 'll be bubbie-jock Will,
 A Bushby sac black at the bane ;
 Whate'er they may say o' his failins,
 Sure gamin and reavin are nane.

" " 7-8—*read*,

For now what he wan in the Indies
 Has scour'd up the laddie fu' clean.

" 5, " 7—billie = birkie.

Verse 6, lines 5-8—*read*,

An' there will the Isle o' Saint Mary's
Exult in the worth of her youth ;
Alas for the Isle o' Saint Mary's
In trusting to reason and truth !

" 9, " 1—*read*, And there will be Heron the Major.

" 10, " 2, 3—*read*,

The Maxwells will gather in droves :
Teuch Johnie, staunch Geordie, an' Wellwood.

Pages 203-205.—' BALLAD THIRD : JOHN BUSHBY'S LAMENTATION.'

Verse 3, lines 2-4—*read*,

Made me the judge o' strife ;
But now Yerl Galloway's sceptre 's broke
And eke my hangman's knife.

" " 3-4—*read*,

And thereto was his kinsman join'd,
The Murray's noble name.

Pages 207, 208.—' THE DUMFRIES VOLUNTEERS.'

Verse 1, line 7—permit = allow.

" 2, " 1—curs = tykes.

" 4, " 2—true-born = true-sworn.

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